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NARRATIVE STRATEGIES: COMMUNICATION IN THE PLAYS OF AESCHYLUS AND SOPHOCLES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores narrative theories and their application to ancient tragedy. It is divided into three sections:

SECTION I argues that it is valid to apply narrative theory to drama. It then questions the view that narrative and drama should be understood as polarised modes of communication ("showing" versus "telling", in twentieth century terms). It argues for intrinsic advantages in message narrative.

All narratives in tragic rhesis are then divided into two temporal categories (1) short-range narratives, including the "messenger speech" and (2) longer range narratives of portent, prophecy, dream and curse (PPDCs). Within the episodes of tragedy, a suspenseful structure is often built up by a juxtaposition of (1) and (2).

SECTION II: AESCHYLUS' surviving work is fluid in structure. However, he shows a tendency to create suspense by the build-up of deliberate delays and deceits together with an ambiguous dream or prophecy. These narrative strategies culminate in a central "programmatic" scene in which prophetic narratives are delivered and the structure of the whole work revealed. Anagnorisis often occurs out of these scenes.

A discussion of Persae 249-622 follows, then the Shield scene from Septem, the Cassandra scene from Agamemnon and the Io scene from Prometheus Bound are taken as examples of central narrative scenes. Two short narratives from Septem and Supplices are discussed.

SECTION III: SOPHOCLES' narratives seem as much concerned to cheat expectation as to fulfil it. Dolos is an important concept in the ancient world which also describes the slippery condition of narrative. Greimas' actantial theory is brought to bear on Sophocles' doloi, particularly in Ajax. Sophocles deviates from traditional myth by introducing false narratives and creating "narrative loops". These extensions, observed in Ajax, Trach. and Phil., subvert expectation and explore new areas. The manifold doloi of Electra are analysed.
CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: NARRATIVE THEORY AND TRAGEDY

CHAPTER 1: NARRATIVE AND DRAMA 1
1.1 Can narrative theory be applied to drama? 1
1.2 Tragedy as "narrative" 5
1.3 Tragedy as communication 7
1.4 Narrative versus action, or telling versus showing 9

CHAPTER 2: NARRATIVE TIME IN TRAGEDY 17
2.1.1 Narratives of recent or immediate past: messenger speeches 19
2.1.2 Simultaneous presentation of events 25
2.2 Long range analeptic or proleptic narratives: PPDCs, closure 27
2.3 PPDCs in combination with message narrative 30
2.4 PPDCs and closure 31

SECTION TWO: NARRATIVE IN AESCHYLUS

CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVE SHAPING 33
3.1 General outlines 33
3.2 Scale, openings, focalisation, suspense and emotion 36
3.3 Typical progression 42
3.4 Prophecies and dreams in hermeneutic structure, persuasion, confirmation, recognition. Trilogies. 45
3.5 Delay and deceit 55

CHAPTER 4: SPECIFIC NARRATIVE SEQUENCES 61
4.1 Persae 249—622 61
4.2 Central programmatic narrative scenes 76
4.2.1 Septem 369—719 80
4.2.2 Agamemnon 1072—1330 85
4.2.3 Prometheus Bound 661—886 93
4.3 Small messenger scenes 101
4.3.1 Septem 792—820 102
4.3.2 Supplices 600—624 105

continued...
CONTENTS continued

SECTION THREE: NARRATIVE DOLOS IN SOPHOCLES

CHAPTER 5: NARRATIVE THEORIES, DOLOS AND SOPHOCLES
5.1 Dolos and narrative theories: Greimas’ veridictory square
5.2 Dolos and Greimas’ actantial theory
5.3 Actantial theory: Sophocles and Aeschylus compared
5.4 Actantial power in Ajax

CHAPTER 6: NARRATIVE LOOPS
6.1 Ajax 646–685
6.2 Trachiniae 180–496
6.3 Philoctetes 541–627

CHAPTER 7: DOLOS AND ELECTRA 1–763
7.1 Prologue or outer plot 1–85
7.2 Walling up 373ff.
7.3 The dream 417–427
7.4 Stasimon 472–515
7.5 Electra and Clytemnestra’s agon 516–633
7.6 Clytemnestra’s prayer 637–659
7.7 False messenger scene
7.7.1 Opening dialogue 660–679
7.7.2 Introductory section 680–695
7.7.3 Main section: horse race 696–763
Concluding note
Diagrams

Diagrams
Stories are exciting; they are powerful and important for mankind. They give people what they want, on a very profound level - more than merely amusement or entertainment or suspense.

People's primary requirement is that some kind of coherence is provided. Some stories give people the feeling that there is meshing, that there is ultimately an order lurking behind the incredible confusion of appearances and phenomena that surrounds them. This order is what people require more than anything else; yes, I would almost say that the notion of order or story is connected with the Godhead. Stories are substitutes for God, or maybe the other way round.

I think stories are actually lies. But they are incredibly important to our survival. Their artificial structure helps us to overcome our worst fears: that there is no God; that we are nothing but tiny fluctuating particles with perception and consciousness, but lost in a universe that remains altogether beyond our conception. By producing coherence, stories make life bearable and combat fears.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis reflects developments in narrative theory since the seventies. So far such developments have been applied largely outside the field of classical studies or, if within it, to more obviously narrative texts (e.g. Winkler on Apuleius, 1985 or de Jong 1987 and Richardson 1990 on epic). Although narrative theory is being increasingly applied to the field of tragedy too, it has to date formed the basis for comparatively restricted studies, such as Roberts' work on closure in Sophocles (1988) or de Jong on Euripidean messenger speeches (1991).

This thesis begins by attempting an overview. Using the pioneering work of Genette on narrative time and Bal on focalisation, Section I outlines the role of narrative theory both for an analysis of tragedy in general and, more specifically, for the narrative elements found within tragedy. Section II on Aeschylus then attempts to analyse specific techniques used by the playwright in the light of these findings. New theory is introduced again at the start of Section III on Sophocles, where Detienne and Vernant's sociological study of metis and dolos is adopted as a model for the hermeneutic process and used in conjunction with Greimas' actantial theory. In general theory is used as a framework for interpreting the texts rather than vice versa.

Section I: Narrative theory and tragedy. Chapter I discusses the general validity of narrative theories for drama, reopening the old argument between drama and narrative (or showing versus telling) in an attempt to dispel this often unhelpful distinction and give due weight to the intense power of narrative to focalise experience. Chapter 2 divides tragic rheseis into different groups according to their temporal reach: (1) short-range narratives of immediate or recent past, including the traditional messenger speech (and simultaneous narratives - a subdivision of this first group) and (2), narratives of much greater temporal reach, whether this is analeptic or proleptic. In Greek tragedy, these long-range narratives are almost invariably cast as prophecies, dreams and curses (PPDCs). Some of the best-known tragedies achieve some of their distinctive tragic effect by a similar narrative shaping in which long-range proleptic narratives are interwoven with shorter-range ones, culminating in the messenger's account. But PPDCs can be used analeptically to create closure as well as climax.
Section II: Aeschylus. Chapter 3 discusses the comparative fluidity of formal narrative strategies in Aeschylus' surviving work. A narrative of recent or immediate past delivered by an anonymous messenger is never used as the climax of the work. A different strategy is employed: Aeschylus builds towards a huge central "programmatic" scene in which narratives of enormous temporal reach and comparable significance are delivered by a stage figure of supernatural abilities. This is often the "nerve centre" of the play or trilogy so far, which, with its restricted opening focalisation, has involved the audience in a complex hermeneutic process. Expectations concerning the structure of the play itself, as well as its outcome, are frequently deliberately subverted by the introduction of a series of well-marked delays and deceits. This technique can be contrasted with Euripides' practice, in which the action of the play is seemingly given in synopsis in the prologue. Aeschylus creates a narrative pendulum which, beginning with a small arc, sweeps tantalisingly to and fro over past and possible future. He exploits the inherently unmediated medium of drama, using dreams and oracles to create foci of suspense, uncertainty and ambiguity. In the central narrative scenes, extended prophetic narratives at last clarify and extend the understanding of past, present and future. Anagnorisis may erupt from this scene, or occur immediately afterwards.

Chapter 4 analyses in more detail major sequences of message narrative in Aeschylus: first Persae 249-622, for which there is no close comparison in surviving tragedy, then three major programmatic scenes, the Shield scene of Septem, the Cassandra scene of Agamemnon and the Io scene from Prometheus Bound. By way of contrast, two messenger rheseis, Septem 790-820 and Septem 600-624, are analysed in terms of the reasons for their brevity.

Section III: Sophocles. In an attempt to understand Sophocles' subtle practice better, chapter 5 discusses the inevitable inheritance of doloi in narrative from various theoretical perspectives, including Greimas' veridictory square, but particularly his actantial theory. A general theory of Aeschylean actantial structure is suggested: this is the structure that Sophocles takes over, but he subjects it to various strains. Where Aeschylus' doloi are interim and resolved by anagnorisis, the structure of Sophocles' plays tends not to allow such a simple resolution.
Chapter 6 explores three narrative "loops" in Sophocles, demonstrating the poet's idiosyncratic and fairly frequent habit of using false narrative to create temporary deviations away from the traditional story-line. These extensions subvert the expected shape of the story to an extraordinary extent and free the poet to explore areas of irony and emotion that the traditional myth could not approach.

Chapter 7 explores the development of doloi in the scenes of *Electra* which precede the false message narrative, showing how the text is saturated in all kinds of tricks, deviations, ambiguities and ironies.

Limitations of space have inevitably resulted in a somewhat arbitrary selection of topics and of passages discussed. It is regrettable that there has been no room for Euripides except by way of comparison. However, the structured but flexible approaches of narrative theory undoubtedly provide valuable points of entry to the study of dramatic texts and constitute an advance on some previous work which lacks a methodology. At the end of the thesis I suggest some directions in which the methodology might be further developed.
SECTION ONE: NARRATIVE THEORY AND TRAGEDY

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL ASPECTS

1.1 Can narrative theory be applied to drama?

Narrative theory views any text - not necessarily literary ones - as the product of a communication between a narrator and a narratee. The theory has already been used with more obviously narrative texts to investigate areas such as the sequential ordering of the plot in relation to the linear time-scale of the narrative overall, the focalisation of the narrator, the question of his authority to narrate, and his complex relationship with his narratees.

The question arises, to what extent narrative theory can be applied to drama when the narrator is always hidden behind his characters, and when the codes of communication available for the production of meaning in theatre are so much more complex than those involved in the usual models of narrative communication.

Given such a gross imbalance in the number of codes involved, we must begin by considering both the different hermeneutic task that is entailed by each mode in theory as well as how in fact dramatic and narrative codes (which both originate in oral poetry) are usually meaningfully intermingled.

As Elam's diagram shows, drama has a more intricate and paradoxical relationship to reality than narrative: while pure narrative relies on stimulation through language alone for its mimetic effect, drama, by the establishment of complex framing devices creates a new onstage reality. What happens onstage is "real" because it uses flesh-and-blood people with "real" clothes on, who speak, gesture, react and interact with one another in the present tense. The audience, aurally and visually stimulated, perceives ongoing, unfolding events taking place in a concrete reality. Yet of course,

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1Genette's pioneering work on narrative time in Proust is probably the most influential study. (Genette 1980)
2The current position on focalisation was established by Bal 1981, 202-210 and Bal 1985, 100-114.
3Compare Figs. 1 and 2 on p.179.
all but the youngest of audiences are at the same time well aware that what they see is a continuous deception.

It is the living figure of the actor who embodies the continuous tension between off-stage and on-stage reality. Every stage figure has (at least) a double reference, first within the frame of the play as (e.g.) "Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, stepping out of his chariot onto the tapestry in accordance with his wife's wishes," and secondly as the masked and robed actor with his own identity temporarily in abeyance, cleverly impersonating Agamemnon.

In the dramatic mode, in theory the audience cannot interpret onstage events any better than those occurring offstage (although framing mechanisms are likely to have restricted the range of their possible responses). That means, in terms of characterisation, for example, that there is no possibility of moving beyond the stage of making provisional assumptions about the onstage characters. As in life, nothing is stable beyond basic definitions such as gender, status and age. Motivation can only be partially understood, giving rise to widely varying interpretations. Goffman writes: "Onstage, one character's interpretive response to another character's deeds, that is, one character's reading of another character, is presented to the audience and taken by them to be no less partial and fallible than a real individual's conduct in ordinary offstage interactions would be. But authors of novels and short stories assume and are granted definiteness; what they say about the meaning of a protagonist's action is accepted as fully adequate and true."

The phrase "granted definiteness" seems a useful one, which might be applied to ancient epic narratives as well as modern ones. By contrast, the very plethora of codes at work in the theatre, the fact that the events of the play are interpreted as they occur by the stage figures as well as by the audience, denies the possibility of incontrovertible meaning. In narratological terms, pure drama goes in for multiple focalisation at all times, without any narrative hierarchies to restrict the audience's reaction. So what might be interpreted as an advantage of a sort that drama possesses over narrative (i.e. concreteness), is potentially a loss in terms of the "definiteness" accorded pure narrative.

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4Esslin, 1976, 89: "It is in the actor that the elements of reality and illusion meet: have we come to see Othello as played by Olivier or Olivier as played by Othello? ibid, 91: "We get our pleasure on two levels at the same time: in watching Othello we are deeply moved by the misfortunes of the hero, but at the very same moment when tears come into our eyes at his downfall, we also, almost schizophrenically, say to ourselves: "How brilliantly Olivier held that pause!"
Ancient narrative epic partly acquires its overall definiteness or authority because focalisation is fixed at the outset on the poet, who is at the same time invoking the divine Muse. De Jong's discussion (1987, 52ff.) of the double presentation of the Iliad by both poet and Muse shows how a two-fold, overlapping authority is created. Perhaps it is also just as important that the events described take place in the past tense, so that they fall into the simple category of "what happened", thus by tense alone acquiring a natural authority.\(^6\)

Epic narrative is the traditional channel of history, its truth indisputable, as long as the narrative focalisation remains with the external narrator. When the narrative of the Iliad moves from the Achaean to the Trojan side, or up to Olympus, we have no sense of doubt that 'Homer' can know all this. It is only because the narrative of the Odyssey has overall definiteness that the many false narratives issuing from Odysseus' lips are meaningful rather than creating total chaos.

However, even if drama and narrative have different tendencies that need to be taken into account, it is important to realise that these are not absolute differences. It is not easy to find examples of "pure" narrative or "pure" drama, since the particular virtues inherent in each mode seem from their origins always to have been exploited in conjunction with each other. Homer uses character-speech as well as direct narration, and lyric poets too sometimes give us the direct speech of their characters. Tendencies have always existed to be subverted by the creators of both narrative and drama, as the Russian Formalist principle of "making new" exemplifies.

Narrative has always at least the potential of performance, putting narrative texts into the same category as dramatic texts in the sense that they would require Elam's theatrical communication model to expound all their codes.\(^7\) It is striking that narrative studies (consciously and unconsciously) make great use of theatrical models: "in all the "grammars", "taxonomies" and "morphologies" of narratology, the metalinguistic signs are those which represent pointing, showing, displaying, acting, speaking, framing, décor, and mise-en scène,"\(^8\) Actantial theory also has clear dramatic roots which can be traced from Propp's decision to call his folk-tale

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\(^6\)The Muse is certainly asked to sing in the present tense, but temporal reference is being made to the narrating instance and does not affect the past time of the narrative itself.

\(^7\)The nineteenth-century novel, home ground for narrative theorists, always included sequences of narrator's discourse balanced with character discourse. The very different novelists Ivy Compton Burnett and David Storey (the latter also a playwright) use only character discourse. It was universal practice until the seventeenth century for all texts to be "mouthed", if not read fully out loud.

\(^8\)Maclean 1988, pp.15-16.
figures *dramatis personae*, through Souriau's "dramatic calculus" to Greimas' actants and their narrative dynamics.

Drama and narrative have a common origin in epic narrative. From the outset they were not totally separable. Available evidence\(^9\) demonstrates that the rhapsode of ancient Greece was highly "dramatic", altering his voice to "become" each character in turn. Descriptive passages of the poem were no doubt also given a dramatic rendition:\(^10\) drama and narrative are from the outset each other's *alter ego*.

But if narrative elements are a constant feature of drama, worked out in different ways at different epochs,\(^11\) ancient tragedy, a hybrid form in so many ways, is certainly a striking hybrid of narrative and dramatic codes. The ancient playwrights alternate dialogic episodes with sung narratives from the chorus at a different diegetic level, or with a messenger's *rhetis*. At such moments a "definiteness" may temporarily be granted (perhaps ironic), and there may be little sense of theatre's synaesthetic "concreteness." At each juncture between different modes and different focalisations the reader/audience is freshly re-engaged in his struggle to discover meaning.\(^12\) The use of modes and focalisation varies between the playwrights and can be characteristic: for example, while Sophocles' prologues are in dialogue form, subtly tailored so that necessary opening information can be "naturally" passed on to the audience, Euripides creates heterodiegetic narrative prologues addressed directly to the audience.\(^13\)

Drama has been defined as "a fusion of a fixed and a fluid component" (Esslin 1976, 33), where the fixed element is the text and the fluid one the performance. "A dramatic text is a blueprint for ... mimetic action, it is not yet itself, in the full sense, drama."\(^{ibid.}\) 24. Writers on theatre and drama rightly insist on the importance of the performance element. Our limited understanding of the performance conventions of ancient drama is a real loss. Stage action is "an inextricable element of his (the

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\(^9\)The evidence for rhapsodic performance is surveyed by Herington 1985, pp. 10-15.

\(^10\)cf. Esslin on Dickens' public readings: "Clearly his (Dickens') vocal characterization of his fruity ... characters amounted to "acting." And as to the purely narrative, descriptive, dialogue-free portions of the text: Dickens, in reading these, in a highly emotional and subtly differentiated voice that painted the mood and the scenery, was still an actor: he acted the role of the character "Charles Dickens," the compulsive story-teller." (Esslin 1987, 24)

\(^11\)cf. Pfister p.59: "Traditionally ... dramatists have tended to create mediating communication systems ... whether in the guise of the chorus in classical tragedy, the objective self-descriptions of the allegorical figures of the mediaeval morality plays, the numerous examples of direct contact between stage and audience in plays ancient and modern, or Brecht's epic theatre."

\(^12\)cf. Stanzel, 66f.: "many of the specially interesting phenomena of narrative discourse are located right at the border-line between these two different types of discourse." (= narrator and character discourse)

\(^13\)cf. Pfister 76ff. on the prologue speaker as an epic element in drama.
playwright's) communication and hence of his meaning” (Taplin 1977, 2). However, we have the competence to do at least some of the necessary reconstruction work and we naturally do so via the text, since this is the surviving element. Given that Attic tragedy is only intermittently available in performance, this approach has been normal and necessary practice ever since the fifth century B.C.: to read the text, from it imagine the performance element, and develop one's interpretation of the whole. It may well be that "narrative competence" can also include "theatrical and dramatic competence", which would mean that the reader takes theatrical codes into account as far as he can in his reading.

Narrative theory, then, may be applied to drama. Narrative and drama are both culturally-shaped language communications, liable to the sort of literary hermeneutic activity analysed in detail by Ricoeur who employs the phrase "helix of dynamic productivity" to describe the process of creation of meaning. Both forms excite in the reader/audience what Barthes has called "the passion to discover meaning." Both forms derive their existence and meaning from life, and in this sense are equally mimetic. Unlike incoherent life however, they are both "intensely and meaningfully shaped."

1.2 Tragedy as "narrative"

The first, most general position to take up concerning narrative theory and tragedy, is to formulate an overall view of each tragedy as an intelligible communication or narrative. From this perspective, it is apparent that not only obvious narrative elements such as the messenger speech may be investigated for their narratological properties, but all other elements in a tragedy also, such as prologue, rhesis, stichomythia, choral ode, etc.. Each of these formal elements communicates to the internal and external narratees in its own particular way, with different truth effects and emotional colouring developed within the tragic tradition. The poet thus has available to him at any point a variety of messengers and a variety of formal modes through which he can develop his theme, and message narrative must ultimately be seen as just one element in the flow of communication which constitutes the play as a whole.

1cf. Ionesco 1962, 185 (quoted by Pfister, 13): "mon texte n'est pas seulement un dialogue mais il est aussi "indications scéniques". Ces indications scéniques sont à respecter aussi bien que le texte, elles sont nécessaires."


3Easterling 1990, 108.
Tragedy exhibits no overall narrator such as "Homer", operating at a different diegetic and temporal level of narrative from the heroes. Instead, operating at the same diegetic and temporal level as that in which the action of the play takes place, any of the *dramatis personae* may take it in turns to supply the function of narrator, or to be the internal audience or narratee. This is not really different in kind from the debate scenes between heroes in the *Iliad*, except that there are no linking sentences such as "Thus spoke x, but y..." However, just as we see happening with characters in Homer - most obviously Odysseus in the *Odyssey* but also, for example, Nestor in the *Iliad* - the stage figures themselves are capable of launching into narratives of their own.

The complicating factor here is the chorus, which is essentially hybrid and fluctuating in nature; there are always exceptions to the generalisations one would like to make about it. Its spatial separation from the actors, its separate sections of singing and dancing during the play when the actors are not present or not actively developing their roles, its group memory and its overt moralising seem to put it, on the one hand, at a different diegetic and temporal level from the main action. These features give the chorus a typological resemblance to a purely external narrator, witness rather than participant. On the other hand, there are notable occasions when the chorus itself is the major character in the play (e.g. *Supp.*, *Eum.*), when the intervention of the chorus definitely contributes to the action (e.g. *Cho.*, *Ion*), as well as many subtler occasions when the chorus interact with the protagonist and his emotional state in a lyric exchange, offering words of encouragement, modification, suggestion, comparison, etc. Further, it is also, through its representation of the community, the suffering victim of the action, afflicted by the plague in *OT*, threatened by Aegisthus in *Ag*. It cannot view the stage action from the distanced, temporal perspective with which Homer sees the war of Troy. The narrating occasion of Homer is always after the city has fallen; he knows the outcome of all the encounters between Greek and Trojan, the ultimate fates of Achilles, Hector, etc.

The chorus, on the other hand, despite their frequent attempts at prediction (derived from their overall authority as repositories of the community's wisdom) are often

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17 Divine prologue-speakers may approach such a position, however: see 41-2. For a subtle investigation of the function of gods as *didaskaloi* within the plays, see Easterling 1993, 77-86.

18 See Ley and Ewans 1985, 75-84: on the basis of acoustic evidence, practical experience of teaching classical drama and the experimental findings of the Greek Theatre Project, the authors show that the actors were more likely to have used the orchestra space (especially along the radius from the centre of the orchestra to the middle of the stage building) than a supposed stage. The manifestly subtle range of interactions between stage figures and chorus to be found in the text accords very well with these findings. Chorus and stage figures could be readily intermingled. See also Rehm 1992, 34-6 for the close physical interaction between the two.
wrong about the future: they can be both wrong and right within the compass of a single ode.

So despite the difficulties, it seems only sensible to define the chorus in general as a potential narrator or narratee just like the other characters, while looking carefully at specific narrative functions the chorus of any one play may carry out.

1.3 Tragedy as communication

Greek tragedies show signs of being structured so that narrative information and its presence or absence, rather than being an element that is buried as far as possible in favour (for example) of conversational naturalism or psychological realism, is often, by contrast, a foregrounded element of the drama. This is not to be accounted for by the restricted linear nature of drama (as opposed to painting, which presents all its information at the same time), or by a view that any of the surviving Greek tragedies are technically naive.

Tragedy displays an intermittent but continuing concern with communication, with converting ignorance to certain knowledge. One common type of choral ode, from Aeschylus onwards, is sung in a state of tension while news is awaited, and the idea of waiting for certain, eye-witness information is prominent in several episodes of Ag. and the earlier part of Pers. and Med., for example. The difficulty of getting a true first-hand account is experienced harshly by many of Sophocles' heroes - notably Deianeira, Electra, Philoctetes. Plays with nostos plots naturally give rise to a concern for intelligence, on the part both of the returning hero and those waiting.

In the tiny scene Cho. 838-54, we see Aegisthus enmeshed and destroyed by false narrative; this scene is itself only one peak of an extraordinary build-up of suspense, surprise and speed, punctuated by the chorus, which begins at 652 and culminates in the two murders: throughout this sequence the tension is built almost entirely round the ability to exchange true and false messages in quick succession between one party and another. No one who had seen this series of scenes successfully performed could doubt the role of ἀγγελία in the creation of suspense.

At 838 Aegisthus enters, as he says, ὑπάγεσθος but without his guards, since Clytemnestra's message (716-7) has been intercepted by the chorus, who have set up Cilissa as their deceitful messenger. Aeschylus has taken pains to show us the set-up
being created in an unusual earlier scene. Aegisthus’ dialogue with the chorus is restricted absolutely to the need to verify the information he has received. It is clear to the audience that verification = going inside = being murdered, and indeed after a brief choral interlude his death cries are heard (at 869). In the logic of drama, to be deceived by a false narrative is very often the prelude to being killed (cf. the carpet scene in Ag. or E. Hec. 101ff.). The discrepant awareness between false narrator and victim-narratee creates great tension, and the onstage scene of deception virtually symbolises the offstage murder that will shortly take place.

On a simple technical level, entries and exits are frequently motivated by the need either to give or to receive information. Sometimes a character enters saying he has heard voices and wishes to know more. Sometimes the getting of information itself is thematised and forms the basis of the action. OT is clearly a play with a plot structure based on acquiring and understanding information; in a different way the action of Hipp. is made to turn on critical moments in which information is passed from one character to another. In contrast with, for example, Shakespearian tragedy, it seems true to say that Greek tragedy distinctly encourages the audience (as external narratee working in parallel with the internal narratees) to involve itself in the attempt to learn, interpret, understand.

The form early tragedy may have taken does not fully explain this phenomenon. Very early tragedy, no fragments of which survive sufficient for intelligent analysis, doubtless consisted of a series of entrances by an actor who provided the permanently-onstage chorus with information to which they reacted (sometimes with their own kind of narrative), while the single actor disappeared to change his identity. But given the highly sophisticated treatment of the getting of knowledge in the plays, the view that overt "informing" is an awkward inheritance from tragedy's past is surely mistaken.

Contemporary communication does not offer a satisfactory model either, beyond a certain point. Certainly, tragedy reflects the comparatively slow and face-to-face channels of communication available in the fifth century Athenian world. In Herodotus and Thucydides, heralds, scouts, runners and more informal messengers

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19The scene is unusual because we see only the chorus and a minor character, involved in what is, in terms of the trilogy, only a small detail of the plot overall. It is also unusual in (a) having the chorus intervene directly in the plot, and in (b) characterising in some detail a message figure whose speech about nursing Orestes seems to owe as much to comedy as to tragedy (but for three good reasons why the nurse is developed as she is, see Garvie 1986 on 730-82, pp. 243-4).

20For this phrase Pfister 49f. quotes the Shakespearian critic Bertrand Evans, who discusses the “dramatist’s means and ends in the creation, maintenance and exploitation of differences in the awarenesses of the participants and of differences between participants’ awarenesses and ours as audience.”
play significant, sometimes critical roles. In war time, the outcome of decisions made in a day's debate in the Assembly must be often awaited for many weeks, involving whole communities in the process of expectation. News came to the polis as we see it coming to the tragic stage, *viva voce*, from the mouth of an individual who had witnessed events or had been authorised to give a report. However, tragedy still seems to raise by a power what is already an inherent tension in the culture.

Michelini (1982, 21-2) has some interesting thoughts on how a traditional form can come into conflict with newer practices and thus create a focal point out of an element that was not previously in question at all, sometimes giving rise to the need for marked explanation or motivation. The examples she cites do not directly concern us here: it is, however, interesting to think about the "informing" element of Greek tragedy, which may necessarily have comprised a large part of early tragedy without ever being isolated as a "feature" in its own right. Perhaps it is only when a greater naturalism has developed in conveying information that the "classic" messenger speech is then perceived as a discrete structure available for development as a "set piece". (We could guess that the same kinds of shift produced the formal expository prologues in the plays of Euripides.) Often, calling on the strength of the established convention, the messenger speech metamorphoses into a device of great theatrical intensity, constituting one of the peaks of the play, or even the peak.

1.4 Narrative versus action or telling versus showing

We can also consider narrative in another sense, not as communication in the most general terms, including drama, but in a more limited sense as a mode of expression which contrasts with the dramatic mode. Horace's crisp distinction is exactly right

\[ \text{References} \]

21 Cf. the prominent role of Pheidippides, sent by the Athenians to give news to Sparta before the battle of Marathon (Hdt. 6.105) or the story of the dead Taitybylis' anger at the Athenian and Spartan treatment of Darius' messengers (Hdt. 7. 131f.)

22 See Longo 1978 for an account of the messenger's role in contemporary society and on the tragic stage.

23 They are 1) the "generally passive observing role of the chorus" suddenly seems incongruous if death cries are heard offstage in a new technique brought about by the introduction of the stage building into the orchestra; 2) recognition tokens: Sophocles and Euripides include the traditional recognition tokens in their *Electra* plays, but their validity is rejected (and new ones are introduced). Here a traditional narrative element is present, but treated to a sort of *recusatio* technique.

24 The openings of Ant. and Phil. and the opening speech of *OC* (1-13) spring to mind as examples of masterly conveyance of information which is perfectly "naturalised" by being motivated by the needs of the stage figures. The opening of *PE* combines interesting action and multiple points of view at the same time as it sets up the basic situation of the play.

25 Michelini 67: "The formalisation of the messenger scene in Sophocles and especially in Euripides is part of the process by which an original element in the tradition gradually passes into a position of higher relief, by contrast with its changed surroundings."
here: *aut agitur res in scenis aut acta refertur* (Ars Poetica, 179). I believe there is a case for attempting some kind of rehabilitation for the place of narrative within drama, since there is a long and misleading tradition of opposing "narrative" and "action" and finding the second superior to the first. Narrative theory provides a way of disposing of this usually arid distinction.

Leaving lyric out of the picture for the moment, it is clear that major continuous narrative in the episodes of tragedy offers a marked and interesting contrast in mode from dialogue or *dreigesprach*. Unlike the concrete, visual, and essentially aperspectival mode of dialogue, narrative offers to the audience a quite different mediated communication, entirely limited (in theory) by the narrator's perspective.

Traditional comparisons are made in terms of the intrinsic mimetic qualities of the two modes, in the sense of their ability to be vivid, to imitate the stuff of real life. In making such a distinction, the victory is accorded to *showing* rather than to *telling*.

Stage action certainly requires explanatory background information to become intelligible to its audience. The narrative element, with its unlimited freedom to move offstage and through past and future time, can pick out and give significance to certain elements so as to provide a distinct and fresh reading of an old story. However, any view of narrative as *separable* background orientation for the audience, an element tacked on to the "real" action is quite inadequate.

Halliwell's range of definitions for Aristotle's use of the terms *praxis* and *pragmata* both illustrates the perceived gap between narrative and dramatic forms, and helps to close it up. One the one hand, these terms mean action or events which are shown during the course of the play: this can approximate to the term *plot*. The narrative element of tragedy as we mean it here would be largely excluded from a discussion of the play in exclusively plot terms. However, *praxis* and *pragmata* also bear a more generous meaning: Halliwell's phrases for this are "overarching framework", "essential design", and "intelligible substance", bringing us back to the broad definition of narrative with which we began.

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26Modern definitions are differently cast. Cf. Prince 1987: *drama is "the scenic rendering of speech or thought and behaviour*, while narrative is "the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence."

27This is, of course, not to say that the narrative was not in itself enacted in a dramatic fashion, or that the silent reactions of the onstage audience were not important. One thinks of the contrasting listener roles of, eg. Electra and Clytemnestra during the Paedagogos' false speech in S. El., or Medea's onstage reaction to the messenger's account of Creusa's grotesque death, an account which includes descriptions of her husband and children as well.

A distinction between art forms in terms of their different mimetic qualities is not apparent in Aristotle. In Poetics ch.1. tragedy, comedy, epic, dithyramb and aulos-playing are forms all equally mimetic of life. In his final chapter, in which he accords priority to tragedy over epic, he is not basing his judgement on mimetic superiority. Plato, however, had already initiated an insidious distinction, and it is this which seems to have influenced our cultural perceptions.

At Rep.3. 392c5, having discussed the moral content of literature, Socrates turns to its formal structure or lexis, and divides literature into two basic groups. His two categories, unfortunately, are not exactly narrative and drama, and need a little explaining. He takes Iliad 1. 17-42 and recasts it without the direct speech of the heroes and without superfluous description. This new version is defined as pure narrative or ἀπλὴ διήγησις (393d5), narrative "unmixed" (ἀκόμητον) with direct speech. In this kind of narrative the poet is speaking in his own person (λέγει τε οὐτὸς ὁ ποιητής, 393) and does not attempt to persuade his audience that the speaker is anyone but himself. Plato makes no distinction between the actual author or poet and his metonymic representative projected into the text, viz the narrator, as we would do today. It makes no difference to the points at issue, however, if for Plato's "poet" we understand "narrator."

Opposed to this "pure narrative" is μιμήσις or τὸ μιμεῖσθαι, in which Homer represents other characters by using direct speech in the manner of drama. This group is mixed, as the direct speech of the "other characters" is interspersed with the poet's linking descriptions. So the contrast, rather than being between narrative and drama, is really between "mixed" and "pure" forms of expression.

Genette (1980 162-5) has analysed the reworking of the Iliad passage at some length in his own brilliant and suggestive way under the heading "distance". He makes the point that direct speech, when reported still as direct speech in a narrative, as here in

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29 There are two places in Poetics where Aristotle implies that narrative is not part of drama. Neither passage has been totally integrated into the rest of his thinking on the subject. In the first, at 1449b (discussed by de Jong 1991, 117), tragedy is famously defined as that which operates δρωντων και οδύς δυσογγελίας, "by dramatic enactment, not narrative." In the second (1460a), considering Homer, he writes "the poet should speak as little as possible, since when he does so he is not engaging in mimesis" (οὑ γάρ καὶ τοῦτο μιμήσθη). Halliwell reasonably argues that in these passages mimesis is now re-interpreted as something which has to be dramatic or dramatising; but I feel de Jong finds the real solution to the difficulty here. According to her view, Aristotle actually means the assumption of the role of narrator by the poet, and the modern understanding of the poet's "I" as a fictional/dramatic construct, always to be distinguished from the poet's propria persona, helps resolve this problem. See Fig. 2 p.179.

30 We are not at all concerned here with the conclusions Plato himself wishes to draw from the comparison - on the dangers of acting, for example - merely on the possible deleterious effects on later thinking.

31 Modern narrative theory prefers to consider a theoretical narrator rather than an actual author. See fig.2 p.179.
Homer's, can at least appear to be directly mimetic, that is, exact quotation from a supposed real situation. Chryses' address to Apollo (II. 1.37) κλαθὶ μεν, ἀργυρότοξ... is certainly more striking than when it is recast as indirect speech, πολλὰ τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ἦχετο, τάς τε ἐπωνυμίας τοὺς θεοὺς ἀνακαλῶν καὶ ὑπομιμνήσκων καὶ ἀπαίτῶν, εἰ τι κ.τ.λ. (Rep. 3. 394). How much more vivid to hear Chryses' own voice calling on the god and using his eponyms, rather than being flatly told that he used eponyms!

But perhaps the most obvious effect of Plato's recasting is the changed length. Plato's version is only 136 words, Homer's around 200. A notable loss in the condensation are some of the stylistic formulas, which could be considered redundant information; "Ως ἐφατ´ (33) or τὸν ἕκκομος τέκε Λητώ (36). But these are not just formulaic padding. One must conclude, as Genette does, that these purely descriptive passages are important in creating Barthes' "Effet du réel". Of line 34 (βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφολισβοῦ θελάσσης) he writes, "The loud-sounding shore serves no purpose other than to let us understand that the narrative mentions it only because it is there, and because the narrator, abdicating his function of choosing and directing the narrative, allows himself to be governed by "reality", by the presence of what is there and what demands to be "shown." A useless and contingent detail, it is the medium par excellence of the referential illusion, and therefore of the mimetic effect: it is a connotator of mimesis. So Plato, with a sure hand, suppresses it in his translation as a feature incompatible with pure narrative."

Socrates' account is an example of what a text would be like if a poet "never concealed his own personality," or never concealed his own persona behind another character, as we see in drama. Now it so happens that the personality of the narrator he has chosen is the kind that suppresses all attempts at vivid showing and chooses to restrict himself to telling, and there is no doubt that the result is lacking in vivid and lifelike detail, and more distant from "felt experience." However, it is clear from the narrated passages of the Homer extract that narrators do not necessarily have to abandon attempts at showing or to be less mimetic.

I would suggest that it is likely that Plato's dreary rendition of Homer had a negative effect on the perception of narrative in general. Certainly we find in Horace a clear expression of the opinion that dialogue is intrinsically better than narrative:
This view was vigorously taken up again in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century, particularly by the Anglo-American school in relation to the aesthetics of the novel, cast this time in terms of the superiority of "showing" over "telling." It may be that this largely unchallenged ideology has caused critics to gloss over any real study of the intrinsic properties of message narrative, and to fail to see that it might be a positive choice of the poet, rather than one forced upon him by the (alleged) traditional restrictions of Attic drama.

Evolutionary or teleological views of tragedy have not helped here; especially the view that sees drama as an art form that originated in choral lyric, added solo narrative, and then became increasingly dramatic as it achieved its fifth century form. There is a tendency to view message narrative as though it were an evolutionary weakness in what "should" be a fully dramatic form. This produces narrow discussion in terms of functional necessity, given the formal constraints of Attic tragedy.

It is true that the continuous presence of the chorus at least implies a unity of place which cannot lightly be negotiated away, with the result that events occurring within the stage building or "abroad" in any sense must be conveyed by means of a messenger; however the interesting exceptions to this rule point the way towards a more generous appreciation of the possibilities of the genre.

Both dramatic "showing" and narrative "telling" are likely to have different characteristic strengths which ancient dramatists well knew how to exploit and contrast within an individual drama, just as lyric and non-lyric passages are exploited and contrasted, to make complex play with the audience's expectations and emotions. Given the persistent presence of messenger narrative in the latest surviving tragedies, it is insufficient to understand them merely as a survival of archaic practice, and to

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*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus, et quae
ipse sibi tradit spectator. (Ars Poetica 140-2).*

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22At its most extreme these views have produced novels composed completely of dialogue - see the works of Ivy Compton-Burnett or David Storey, or the "novels" of Beckett which are interchangeable as dramatic texts. See note 6. The idea that "showing" is better than "telling" is still a basic tenet of creative writing courses.

23The unities of place and time are not apparent in Poetics however: they first become prescriptive in Castelvetro's manual, Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta, Basel 1576.

24The chorus leave the stage A. *Eum* 232; S. *Ajax* 814; E. *Alec* 746; *Hel* 385. The exceptions are discussed by Bremer 1976.
talk, as Bremer does, of the "conservatism"\(^{35}\) of playwrights whom we know to have been thoroughly innovative in many other respects.

There are, in fact, positive advantages of narrative that are unavailable to dialogue. It is illuminating to describe them in accordance with Bal's four basic categories of actors, events, time and space, these being the elements with which any form of literature may communicate. The following examples are all taken from Sophocles' messenger speeches.

**Actors:** the number of participants in the event narrated can be unlimited. Hyllus' narrative about Heracles' downfall is strengthened by the description of the entire army as horrified witnesses frozen with fear (ἄταξ ... λέγως, Trach. 783), and Hyllus realistically describes himself standing among them until his father picks him out from the crowd. Similarly, the Paedagogus creates an internal audience for his story: everyone at Delphi finds Orestes glorious (εἴσηλθε λαμπρός, πάσι τοῖς ἐκεῖ σέβας, El. 685). These internal mass audiences are a mirror and guide for the reactions of the theatre audience, and they help transform the narrative account into that of a reported drama. Such audiences can appear and disappear effortlessly, but they can have an effect on the onstage action too: the Greek soldiers who are described crowding around Teucer and calling for Ajax' stoning (Ajax 721ff.) raise onstage fears for Ajax' safety and hasten the chorus offstage to search for their master.

**Events:** the supernatural and semi-supernatural can be effortlessly described (the miraculous death of Oedipus in OC; the whirl of dust the guard sees in Ant; the supernatural powers of the Maenads in Bacchae;\(^{36}\) the bull from the sea in Hipp., Deianeira's account of the poisoned tuft of wool in Trach.); also acts of gruesome horror - murders, blindings etc. Only the salient or significant details of any action need to be referred to. Events which could not be convincingly or clearly staged in dramatic form can in narrative be made completely intelligible to the audience.

**Time and space:** the playwright has an infinite amount of opportunity to elide, magnify, pause etc. and create the exact effect he wishes. These possibilities are connected with a powerful control over time in narrated events: if it were possible to dramatise them on stage they would take much longer than the few minutes it takes the narrator to give his account. One of the virtues of mediated narration is that it

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\(^{35}\)See Bremer 42. De Jong surprisingly does not dissent from this view (de Jong 1991, 118).

\(^{36}\)Note, however, the very different techniques used to convey the supernatural in the "palace miracles" scene.
can make temporal elisions at any point, cutting out the inessential and lingering at an important moment. Where the poet lingers, we are entitled to look for his particular concerns: thus Seneca devotes twenty-four gruesome lines to an account of Hippolytus' mangling (Sen. Hipp. 1085-1108) compared with Euripides' four (E. Hipp. 1236-1239). The pace of narration itself, accelerating inexorably from a slow, scene-setting start to climax and pause on the moment of horror, as is often the case, can heighten the tension. Space is similarly fluid, and the narrative, through the focalisation of the narrator can, like a camera, alter focus, pan, close up. Important other locations can be brought into play: the altar of Zeus at Cenaeum where Heracles is offering sacrifice, the race track at Delphi, the λιθόστρωτον κόρης/νυμφεῖον Ἀιδοῦ κοῖλον (Ant. 1204-5).

Given these infinitely flexible narrative possibilities, it is not surprising that messenger speeches frequently engage the intellect and emotions of the audience in the profoundest way. There is no doubt that the messenger speech frequently has supreme importance in the play overall. There is good evidence that contemporary audiences liked messenger speeches\(^3\) and it is noticeable in modern performances today that restless school children settle down to listen when the messenger starts to speak. With its highly dramatic narrative content, often conveyed in the vivid present tense with bursts of direct speech, the whole delivered by an actor trained in the use of mime and impersonation, the narrative becomes a virtual drama in its own right. As Easterling remarks, "The telling and the listening become the action for the duration of the story."

I also feel, although it is hard to be anything but subjective, that the comparative simplicity of mediated narrative after a complex lyric brings another kind of advantage, since it offers the audience the intellectual and aural pleasure of variety, just as we welcome the different tempi and colours of the successive movements of a symphony. In Sophocles, the culminating factual news report comes almost always immediately after the emotional and intellectual complexity of a lyric; this is perhaps the greatest contrast of mode possible within Attic drama.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) De Jong 1991, 118 note 4, gathers the scattered evidence for this view. I note also the large number of messenger figures illustrated on vases (see Trendall and Webster 1971; Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978-82; Prag 1975).

\(^3\) It is worth considering the effective contrasts at work in the following examples from Sophocles: OT messenger speech 1227-1285: follows choral ode, ἤ γενοτι ἤροταν (1186ff.). Ant. messenger speech 1192-1243: follows choral ode to Dionysus, κολωνυμεῖ Καθημείς νύμφας ἔχομαι (1115). QC 1586-1666: follows choral ode to Persephone and chthonic gods, εἰ θέμες ἐστι μοι τὸν ἄραν νεκρῆν (1556). Differently constructed is El. 680-763: this follows the agon between Electra and Clytemnestra and the latter's cryptic prayer to Apollo (516-659).
Listening to continuous narrative is a different experience too from listening to dialogue; in the case of dialogue, the audience must make continuous optical, aural and mental adjustments to take account of who is speaking, and work to assess the points at issue, whereas the information transmitted in mediated narrative is in a sense pre-digested, and (arguably) at its easiest to assimilate.^^

All three playwrights seem to have had a highly developed understanding of the dramatic effects to be gained from the juxtaposition of sections of showing and sections of telling in the episodes of their dramas. We can see that however tense and thrilling the dialogues between impersonated mythical figures may be, with their displays of confrontation, peitho, friendship or paraenesis, it is rightly left to continuous narrative, with its extraordinarily acute capacity for intense focalisation, to convey the heart of the matter.

^^All the same, differing responses of narratees may well complicate the situation (as the reactions of Electra and Clytemnestra to the false messenger speech in Soph. El.).
CHAPTER 2: NARRATIVE TIME IN TRAGEDY

"Narrative is a ... doubly temporal sequence ... : There is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative .... This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives (three years of the hero's life summed up in two sentences of a novel or in a few shots of a "frequentative" montage in film, etc.). More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme." (Christian Metz, *Film language: a semiotics of the cinema*, quoted by Genette 1980 33).

Genette's revealing work on narrative time in Proust indicates the importance of attempting to understand how time is used in any text. Narrative exists in time and is delivered on an occasion in time; it is not possible to define what narrative is without referring to time, nor indeed to make any sense of events without putting them into a chronological structure. Meaning is dependent on ordering in time.

Greek tragedy, speaking very generally, gives rise to two experiences of time: the synchronic time of the stasima, capable of vast shifts of temporal perspective, conspectuses and parallels, tangential reflections on age, the power of love, capacity of man, and the more immediate, diachronic time of the iambic trimeter sections of episodes in which individual characters are seen moving towards fixed end points. The lack of exact alignment between the two time schemes creates a dialectic unavailable to most other modes of drama.

The religious and civic ancestry of the chorus, the already developed mode of expression of the lyric form itself, the wishes, hopes, fears and long memories typical of many choruses, naturally give lyric a vast reach into the past and the future. For the past, choruses always seem to have real authority (cf. Ag. 104-6 for the strongest expression of this); they frequently narrate myths or past events in the hero's family (eg. Trach. 497ff., Ant. 582ff., Phil. 676) - or more simply offer an explanatory

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1 Prince 1987 defines narrative as "the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence." (my ital.; Prince's subsequent modification of his definition is not relevant here.).
3 The parataxis or disjunction between the two creates a gap in understanding, and tends in itself to operate in the opposite way to framing techniques. The creation of all kinds of gaps, whether temporal or factual, is a fundamental narrative technique. Cf. Iser 166: "It is the very lack of ascertainability and defined intention that brings about the text-reader interaction. ... It is this very indeterminacy that increases the variety of communication possible."
4 Rehm 1992, 52 expresses this as a series of oppositions: actor/chorus; rhetoric/lyric; individuated/unindividuated; narrative or argumentative/ imagistic; rational or logical/ emotional or musical.
background (the openings of Pers., Supp., Ag.). The past they describe is never without significance for the future action of the play.

For the future they also give themselves authority and often style themselves prophets (eg. El. 472, OT 1086). However, they are poor narrators of the future, and usually make wilder guesses than the stage figures. Sophocles' choruses in particular are well-known for offering false optimistic outcomes. The combination of authoritative, often paradigmatic information about the past, coupled with emotive and sometimes misleading reaction concerning the present and immediate future sets up a complex dynamic; the chorus offer an intermittent stream of possible meanings with which the audience must at all points of the plot engage.

The chorus cannot leave the stage to return with "hot news," and their approach, in journalistic terms, is thus essentially editorial: the immediate "hard" news of the classic messenger speech is at the opposite end of the narrative spectrum. On the other hand, lyric narratives are not limited to the chorus' own experience, but can on occasion embrace the whole of human knowledge.

More temporal distinctions between sung and spoken sections can be made: by convention, stage figures during scenes are mimetically bounded by the temporal rules that govern our own lives, that is, there is a parallel between stage time and "real" time. By contrast the time that elapses during a choral ode is far more elastic; in terms of stage time, there may be no time lapse while they sing, or perhaps hours or days pass.

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^This generalising statement should not obscure subtleties of practice however. There is an example in OC where choral lyric serves as a virtual replacement of the messenger speech. Creon's men have made off with Oedipus' daughters and Theseus' men are in pursuit. Creon has been verbally worsted already when at 1044ff. the chorus wish themselves where the action is, singing, εἰν' ὁδεῖ τὸν διοικόν (cf. OT 463-482). By the time the brief ode is over, the encounter between Theseus' men and Creon's has been sufficiently narrated via their imagination so that the next scene begins with the immediate return of the two daughters and their reunion with Oedipus. This technique allows us to see the magnanimous authority of Theseus in full play and does not restrict Oedipus' display of paternal joy in the following scene. At the same time a full messenger speech has been avoided, enabling the action to carry on without further delay, and leading inexorably to the great speech 1579ff. without weakening it by an earlier resort to the same mode. (This makes an interesting comparison with the first stasimon of OT in which the chorus similarly describe an ongoing offstage situation; but in OT there is conformity with the usual ironic pattern, since they deludedly describe Laius' murderer as a bull in the wild (φωτις γάρ ὁ Οἰδοράκος ὑλαν ἀνά τὸν νότα καὶ πετραίος ὀ τούρκος, 476f.), while in fact he is all the time within their city). Euripides uses a similar technique in Hipp. The chorus predict Phaedra's suicide 769-775; immediately afterwards the offstage nurse confirms this to the chorus in dialogue 776-789 (the informant is given almost no space to describe what she has seen) and at 790 Theseus enters. See also Hec. 98-152: the choral entry song is primarily a piece of news.

^Though naturally this effect is mimetic only: cf Taplin 1977 29ff., also Genette 1980 86-88 on duration, isochrony and anisochrony.
In the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, the stage figures and the temporal duration of their actions in the episodes tend to be firmly foregrounded and separated from the more achronic choral odes and the secondary narrative and figures paradigmatically evoked there. In Aeschylus, the mythical heroes have not been particularly modernised and the mythical past of the lyrics, in a much more unified, less problematic way, constitutes the entire world of the play. Only once in his surviving plays - Cho. - is reference made to external myth. In Supp. the mythologically undifferentiated daughters of Danaus are both chorus and most important character; in Eum. the non-human chorus of Furies are the major threat to the successful conclusion of the trilogy. By contrast, the later playwrights quite often use the different temporal tendencies of lyric to allude to other, metatheatrical narratives. This can be for a whole variety of purposes (eg. comfort or advice) but sometimes and quite typically, the effect is to create an ironic distinction between the "now" of the stage figures - modern, pragmatic, questioning the past - and the "timeless" voice of traditional community wisdom.

Discarding lyric, which is generally outside the scope of this thesis, we are left with the apparently more restricted temporal scope of the episodes of tragedy. However, here too there is an extremely important category of stage figures who - outstripping the abilities of the chorus - have the authority to speak about the past and the future. These are gods and prophets. When these figures speak, it is clear that the temporal range within the episodes is greatly extended. Consequently we can distinguish two temporally distinct types of iambic trimeter narrative within episodes:

2.1.1 First category: narratives of recent or immediate past: the messenger speech and message narrative defined.

To deal first with one well-studied but ill-defined subset of this category, usually designated "messenger speeches", and readily found in plays by Sophocles and Euripides (but not by Aeschylus): in these, an anonymous stage figure relates...
offstage events occurring within the time-scale of the narrative itself, in the very immediate or recent past. We have only to think of the reappearance of eg. the blinded Oedipus in OT, or Creon in Ant, with Haemon in his arms minutes or moments after the narrated report to find confirmation of the temporal immediacy at stake here. In many of these plays it is possible to show that the ςυστασις των πραγμάτων has been structured so as to make the information released in the messenger speech the climax of hopes and fears generated by the action.

In this kind of play, the narrated offstage events often comprise the climax of the action; yet by an interesting paradox, during the messenger's narrative there is no onstage action at all, apart from the mimetic actions of the messenger and the (silent) reactions of the onstage narratees. On the diegetic level at which the culminating action of the play takes place, there is a marked pause.

This familiar "messenger speech" as an unquestioned, truly distinct and separate element of Attic drama requires some rethinking when we look at it in the light of narrative theory. In the past, critics have selected out only a fluctuating sub-group from the total number of informative rheseis in iambic trimeters, applied the label "messenger speeches" to them, and ignored the problem of relating them to the rest, or distinguishing them as anything more than a rhesis.

A fairly recent example of this practice is to be found in The Stagecraft of Aeschylus, where Taplin 81-2 gives a tripartite definition of messenger speeches: "...anonymous eye-witness, set-piece narrative speech, and over-all dramatic function. When all three elements are combined we have an unmistakable ῥῆσεις; if one or two are absent then we have a scene with affinities or analogies to a messenger scene."

This definition ignores the extremely important question of how the time of the narrated event relates to stage time. But furthermore, each one of his three criteria is wide open to argument: the narrative variety we find in the plays cannot be readily contained within such a rigid set of categories. For example, what of the messenger speech describing Heracles' donning of the poisoned robe in Trach, which is delivered not by an anonymous messenger but by Hyllus? The son narrates his father's destruction to his mother. Does the lack of anonymity debar it from being a "true" messenger speech? If so, how should it otherwise be defined? Also, what of the Guard's two speeches in Ant? He is anonymous and unrelated to the ruling

Although the messenger speech was of course identifiable enough by contemporaries to be satirised in comedy; see Ar. Birds 1119f. There is a likely parody of Or. 866f. in the fragments of Menander's Sic. 175f.
house, but highly characterised. Is anonymity still a criterion under these circumstances? In what sense does the information from this part of Ant. fail to be of "overall dramatic function" compared with other information given in the play? How should we define Deianeira's description of the tuft of wool at Trach. 663ff., or the kind of urgent sequence of messages between battle-field and general that occur in the shield scene Sep. 375ff.?

In widening the definition away from "messenger speech" and towards "message narrative", and including a temporal criterion, as I am attempting here, the problems drop away. A speech which does contain all of Taplin's criteria is much better understood as operating at one end of the spectrum of the large group of informative rheseis spread throughout tragedy. Many speeches at other points in the spectrum contain some if not all of the features associated with the "messenger speech."

Discussion of such features, which is normally restricted only to the ill-defined sub-group, could well be applied to the whole range of message narratives, and indeed the whole area could be opened up to fresh investigation.¹²

Ajax 284-330 is a message narrative in which Tecmessa describes to the chorus Ajax' madness and subsequent return to health. It contains surprisingly many of the characteristics associated with "messenger speeches":

Features of overall structure:

1. The speech relates the recent significant action of a hero, presented complete in itself with scene-setting and expansive detail making use of (some) epic features (285-304).

2. It describes the emotional aftermath (305-322).

3. It returns us to the present circumstances (vôv δ', 323), and prepares us for the re-entry of the hero (Ajax heard groaning, 333).

Small features:

1. Tecmessa is prompted into continuous iambic trimeters by a question from the chorus (282-3, τίς γὰρ ποτ’ ἀρχῇ τὸν κακὸν προσέπτατο; δὴ λέουσον ἡμῖν τοῖς ξυναλγοῦσιν τοῦχας.)

2. She begins by signalling that she ready to divulge her information, ἀπεν μαθήσῃ τοῦργον (284): this very standard opening no doubt serves as a preparatory signal to the audience as well.

3. Typical passage of direct speech: 288-293 is in fact a dialogue.

4. Trope about the impossibility of conveying what it is that she has experienced at 295. This too is fairly standard (cf. QC 1581-2).

All these features are identical with those normally only associated with “set messenger speeches” and discussed only in that context. One could also include the groans with which the ruined hero announces his arrival after a brief comment from the chorus (Ajax 333, 336, 339) and compare them with Oedipus’ groans OT 1307, Heracles’ groans (intermittently from Trach. 983), or Creon’s groans, Ant. 1261ff. A slight variant is to be found in QC and El. The hero is dead (or in the case of El., believed to be) so we have preparation for the entry of the hero's remains followed by the groans or laments of Antigone (QC. 1670) and Electra (El. 826ff.)

In this example, it is the figure of Tecmessa as narrator which gives the speech its distinctive edge. Far from being an anonymous bystander, Tecmessa is an important, nobly-born figure in her own right, passionately participating in the action because of her relationship to Ajax and Eurysaces. In the embedded direct speech of 288-293 she addresses Ajax, "entering" the embedded scene as much as Ajax allows her to in an attempt to restrain him. Further, in the passage of indirect speech (312ff.) it is she who tells him what he did while mad (316).

At 328-330 Tecmessa concludes by turning to her addressees and asking for their help as friends. Peitho is not a characteristic of the anonymous messenger, whose motivation for speaking is not normally particularly significant but may be for profit (charis), or, more simply, seem to spring from an overwhelming need to impart.

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13 Cf. Trach. 190-1 ἔκας σοι πρῶτος ἀγγείλας τάδε πρός σοι τι κερδένωμι καὶ κτῆμιν χάριν. See also OT 1004-6;
information, perhaps in an attempt to come to terms with the experience by drawing conclusions about it:¹⁴ but in societies more dependent on oral delivery of messages, it is a probably unquestioned assumption that anyone with news will spread it.¹⁵

As a second example Hyllus' speech, Trach. 749-812, is interesting for being the first half of a diptych of two messenger speeches, divided by a choral ode: the second speech 899-946 is delivered by the Nurse. In its direct familial and emotional participation, Hyllus' speech shows many similarities to Tecmessa's, and where she is motivated to conclude with peitho, his narrative is framed by angry condemnation. His "headlines" (734-7) significantly do not even refer to what has happened to Heracles, but concentrate entirely on his renunciation of his mother, while the entire coda (807-12) refers back, ring-fashion, to these opening expressions of hatred. The introductory line about "learning" found in many messenger speeches is grudging and, as Easterling's commentary notes, Hyllus "reminds her of her guilt" throughout (758, 773, 775-6, 791-3). Like Tecmessa, this narrator plays an active part in the scene he narrates; he is picked out of the crowd of horrified onlookers by his father. In both these examples, the messenger is not only witness but also participant.

It is obvious that these known, related messengers, describing the ruin of husband or father to narratees (who are in their own way entirely dependant on the ruined figure too), create great effects of pathos. However, Hyllus' speech also has an effect on the action. It acts specifically to trigger Deianeira's suicide in an unexpectedly premature way, creating a diversion away from the plot and causing, maybe, some traces of technical difficulty in rejoining it.¹⁶ After her highly marked silent exit (813-20) and the following choral ode, comes the second messenger speech which reports her death; it is only after the chorus have reacted again to this second report that we hear Heracles' long-expected but delayed groans (983). Sophocles, having produced not one but two speeches depicting the destruction of husband and wife, has

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¹⁴Since the playwright rarely provides any motivation for this group of messengers, explanatory reference to the basic psychological need (cf. The Ancient Mariner) to tell over horrible events is often made by critics at this point; in our society this might be done under analysis, and a modern name for some messengers might be "disaster victim." The reactions of messengers are in fact quite diverse. I note that the messenger of Ant. prefaces his account with as many as seventeen lines of gnomic reflection, whereas the Exangelos at OT 1223-1231 is concerned only to express an idea of the sheer magnitude of what he has witnessed.

¹⁵For a good discussion of this whole area see Longo 1978.

¹⁶At 719f. she imagines nobly dying with her husband (τὰ φυλακά τίνι ὡρίθ ... συνθάκτειν).

¹⁷Eurydice's death in Ant. is also the unpredicted result of hearing a message, but it does not create the same dramatic problems. Eurydice is not so fully presented in the play; it is the message, not in any way the messenger, which brings about her death. After the striking effect of the messenger virtually having to start his message for a second time on her account (cf. Ant. 1190), her fate is quite seamlessly subsumed within the overall action and her corpse is straightforwardly added to Haemon's (Ant. 1293). (Sophocles' diversions or narrative loops are the subject of chapter 6.)
to bring the play back on course: the chorus seem to articulate the problem involved when they sing *potéra proteron* 947.¹⁸

The careful preparation made for the arrival of Heracles (803-6, 901-2) now has to be made to pay off: at 962ff. his imminent entry is indicated by the chorus. Presumably while they sing this last stanza or just after, Hyllus without motivation re-enters from the stage-building,¹⁹ just as the cortège finish bringing on Heracles' body. Ὅμων ἐγὼ σοῦ, he cries, words which could be understood to link back to the Nurse's picture of him distraught beside his mother's body: the bridge from Deianeira to Heracles is then economically made with the next word, πάτερ. Thus the two narratives are plaited together and the action continues. The physical focus helps too: the stage building which Hyllus leaves contains the dead Deianeira, the cortège he sees on leaving carries the dying Heracles. Without the simultaneous arrival of the cortège the pattern of other plays would produce at least some momentary expectation that the Nurse's account will lead into a scene in which Hyllus laments his mother.

Sophocles has taken some dramatically risky steps to make Hyllus messenger and cause of his mother's earlier death. But his choice is consistent with the rest of the play, with its intense familial focus. Destructive actions are confined to wife and son, binding the nuclear family tightly together in tragedy.²⁰ It is significant that the overt cause of it all, the silent Iole, is to be a future family member too, mother of the glorious Heracleidae as Hyllus will be the father.

The suggestion of these mythical heroes with their positive Athenian significance²¹ offers the audience a set of future perspectives unavailable to Hyllus in his anguish. It has an ambiguously mitigating effect on our view of the tragic action.²² The choice of Hyllus rather than an anonymous messenger shows a highly significant dramatic economy: Hyllus the son takes the audience as close as possible to the

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¹⁸Though the difficulty of beginning a lament and its antithetical shaping (see eg. Ant.1343ff.) is a traditional element of lament.

¹⁹See Winnington-Ingram 1969 for Hyllus' entry from the stage-building rather than with the procession. As Easterling remarks (1982, *ad loc.*), 901-2 show that Hyllus did intend to go to meet his father - but his mother's suicide has obviously overturned this plan. This interpretation is clearly better than supposing that Hyllus has had the time to leave off lamenting by his mother's body and go to join the (offstage) procession.

²⁰Hyllus appears with both parents, even though (in the play) they themselves never encounter each other.

²¹See Loraux' discussion, 1986, 54 and 65-9: Athens traditionally offered protection to the Heracleidae when they were harassed by Eurystheus and his Peloponnesians.

²²Audience response is not likely to be uniform then or now. Where some might find grounds for comfort, thinking perhaps that the future will be glorious: the son suffers now but in fact he will be an honoured progenitor, Roberts 1988 finds a clear ironic twist: "Hyllus cannot know that the marriage that now makes him wretched will lead to a glorious line of descendants ... Hyllus is marrying his father's woman, Hyllus' descendants will bear and perpetuate Heracles' name, not that of Hyllus."
tragic experience and then forward into a time when remote mythical past can form a link with the Athenian audience. The more Hyllus' role with his parents, including his role as narrator of his father's doom, can be understood, the better sense we can begin to make of the complex problems of the ending.

2.1.2 Simultaneous presentation of events

This interesting sub-category is really only a special development of the previous one. Here the time lapse between the offstage event taking place and its onstage narration is collapsed. Given the murderous concerns of Greek tragedy, this usually means that a victim's offstage cries are heard and reacted to at the very moment of his murder (just as in a horse race on the radio we can hear the hooves thundering past while the commentator describes the position of the leaders in the present tense).

This simultaneity could not be expected to give rise to a sustained narrative, as in the previous category; the point here is that the action can carry on without the pause created by full narrative.

Simultaneous presentation begins with the use of offstage cries, the earliest extant example of which occurs Ag. 1343 and 1345, where the chorus hear Agamemnon crying that he has been struck (cf. Cho. 869). Similarly, Med. 1271-2 we hear the offstage voices of Medea's two little boys in a snatch of dialogue to which the chorus then react. It would not be accurate to call their reactions examples of narrative; the offstage voices interweave with the chorus, who then break into a confusion of questions and advice addressed to each other; we are shown, not told, as the offstage cries are not mediated by any description. With great brevity the cries themselves substitute for a possible narrative, "Agamemnon has been murdered" or, "Medea has killed her children."

The ancient staging of simultaneous narration makes use of the fact that a narrator always needs to be in a privileged position vis à vis his narratee. The different spatial positions of characters and chorus can be exploited to set up a vivid chain of communication. Thus at E. Hipp. 565-600, Hec. 1035-43, and S. El. 1398-1421 there is a major character onstage as well as the chorus. Being nearer the stage building, this figure quite naturally "hears" more clearly what is going on inside, and so informs the chorus. In Hipp. and El. the scene begins before anything has happened,

23Otherwise, simply, the narrative would be redundant.
and the tension builds as Phaedra and Electra get the chorus to be silent (Hipp. 565,567; El. 1399). There are excited questions and commands (Hipp. 571-3. 576, 580, 585ff., El. 1400, 1402, 1406, 1410).

What Phaedra overhears is the Nurse's failure to persuade Hippolytus to return Phaedra's love. We do not hear his voice, but she reports to the chorus verbatim a couple of his expressions: τὴν κακῶν προμνηστικῶν, τὴν δεσπότου προδοσίαν (589-90). Then this offstage dialogue "continues" onstage almost immediately afterwards when the Nurse and Hippolytus enter at 601, an extremely effective and naturalistic technique. Meanwhile, the complicated device of simultaneous narrative (which requires three "virtual" parties in action at once) has already shown us Phaedra herself hearing and reporting the news and, significantly, deciding on death (599-600).

The situation in El. is even more complex, creating tremendous immediacy and excitement. We learn at 1402-3 that Electra's presence outside is motivated by a desire to keep on the look-out for Aegisthus; so we expect his return at any moment to interrupt the first murder - another tightening of tension. There is danger from within and without.

Both Electra and the chorus have heard voices (1406-8), but at first the audience do not. Then it is as if the volume from within increases and the offstage voice of Clytemnestra is heard. In her first cry she addresses Aegisthus, in her second her murdering son (1409, 1410-11). To this second offstage vocative (uniquely in extant tragedy) the onstage Electra replies in justification (1411-12). Clytemnestra's third and final cry announces her own death, and again the verse is an antilabe divided between mother and daughter. The use of antilabe through the wall of the stage building is a brilliant stroke.

In this brief scene Electra narrates somewhat to the chorus and holds a dialogue with her offstage mother; the effect is to make her virtually "in at the death." Interestingly, for the second half of this scene the chorus take over the role of the

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24 That is to say, there is no indication of another speaker in the text; but it would certainly be within the director's discretion to allow incoherent cries to be heard before 1408 if he wished. cf. Trach. 863ff.: the chorus talk of a καινότος they hear before the Nurse enters. The sound of the thunder in O.C heard by everyone on stage could have been left entirely to the imagination or convincingly created by the rattling of a metal sheet.

25 This reads like a deliberate recall of Ag. 1343 and 1345.
narrator (in their distinctively choric way) and offer the generalising comments of 1413-14 and 1417-21.26

2.2 Second category: Long range proleptic and analeptic narratives. Portents, prophecies, dreams and curses (PPDCs). Closure.

Temporality in narrative is a complex affair. It is not merely a question of order, of narrative sequence in a simple linear fashion. Narratives violate their own chronological sequence, and it is always important to understand at what point in the play information of any kind is released.27

Tragedy exhibits a rich variety of temporal deviations. These make up a major part of the interplay between the onstage action and the audience. Using Genette’s terminology, we find in tragedy examples of different kinds of anachronies: achrony, analepsis, prolepsis, metalepsis, paralipsis and so forth, all of which, as they occur, affect our understanding. These anachronies can sometimes be left in various stages of disconnection with the main narrative, leaving junctures and conspicuous gaps, suggesting but denying the possibility of satisfactory interpretation: some choral odes of Sophocles work in this way.28 Pro- and ana- leptic narrative on the one hand, and immediate narrative on the other, may be thought of as two contrasting narrative categories which the playwright may use to comment, reflect and answer one another. The overlapping and discontinuous form of tragedy, with its alternating sung and spoken sections, is ideally suited to promoting this effect.

Merely within the episodes themselves, however, we find the use of one particular set of narratives which relate portent, prophecy, dreams and curses (henceforth PPDCs). A striking characteristic of the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles29 is

26Cf. Med. 1282ff. where the chorus react to the offstage cries of the dying sons by relating the story of Ino (a great aunt of Jason) who also murdered her two children.
27Cf. Buxton’s “bleeding chunks” objection to an interpretation made by taking a passage out of its position in the whole text (1991, 40).
28E.g. the epode of the first stasimon of S. El., 504-15.
29Euripides, whose practice I have not studied in detail, makes less use of these elements, perhaps reflecting an increasingly sceptical intellectual climate. Thucydides’ references to prophecy usually concern the discrepancy between oracle and outcome (eg. 2.8,17,21,47; 5.103; 8.1). Euripides’ characters are notoriously critical of mantike (eg. Hel. 744-60; El. 399-400; IT. 570-1; Phoen. 954-9; Bacch. 255-7; IA. 955-9). More striking is his virtual omission of PPDC elements where they had been traditionally present. In E. El. Clytemnestra has no dream, and the oracle is not referred to until it appears somewhat tangentially in the stichomythia between Orestes and Electra before Clytemnestra’s murder: Orestes speaks of it in the most slighting way (eg. οὐκ θεοί, πολλά τινι ὧμαθιον ἐθνοποιος, 971). Electra clearly defends the oracle mainly to bolster his courage: at the end of the play Castor fails to explain or justify Apollo (cf. 1244-6). It could be that PPDCs used as Aeschylus and Sophocles had used them felt stale with over-use; certainly Euripides was aiming at novel effects.
their repeated use of PPDCs and their obvious dependence on them as part of their overall narrative strategy.

PPDCs are usually presented as heterodiegetic narratives which run parallel to the major narrative, exerting a control on events and the audience's perception of events. A simple chronological division may be made: they can point forwards (proleptically) towards the climax of the play, or they may be used analeptically in the closing stages to create a sense of closure.

In the fictive world PPDCs provide a definite frame, since there is always an outcome resulting from what was adumbrated in dream or a prophecy. It is in the nature of fiction that no element is irrelevant, however problematic. We all know that dreams come true, prophecies and portents are infallible indicators, and curses are never uttered in vain.  

The external audience of Attic drama knows well that the events outlined will come to pass, but to the internal narratees (stage figures) within the world of the drama, it is not so clear. Through the proleptic narratives, the audience is directed to view the unfolding action in a way that is both omniscient and teleological. The stage action manifests itself as a series of events seen with the heightened perception of foreknowledge as working towards an inevitable end. This perspective contrasts ironically with the stage figures' inability to understand what will happen (despite receiving the same advance notification) until too late.

In practical terms, from the creative playwright's point of view, PPDC narratives are one way of solving the problem of dramatising what are essentially small sections from a much bigger narrative overall. But apart from being a practical dramaturgical aid, if the earliest tragedies were, as Garvie suggests "little more than a messenger speech with lyric content," then the development of all pro- and ana-leptic

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30 Cf. Roberts 1984, 24ff. on the pattern of oracle stories both in tragedy and elsewhere. The narrative rules seem to be that predictions are fulfilled, oracular commands obeyed and oracular prohibitions disobeyed. This pattern is absolutely in accordance with the Proppian model that orders in general are fulfilled and interdictions violated. See also 45ff.

31 A small, subtle example of the way proleptic elements can be used to probe the gap between stage figure and audience understanding comes at Ag. 577-9. This relates to nothing so portentous as even a dream. The Herald merely gives his imagined wording of a dedicatory inscription that will be put up to celebrate the victory over Troy. Painting the future like this seems not so much false as merely quite irrelevant to the sinister direction events in the play are taking. The chorus' total failure to challenge the rosy picture the herald paints makes us question - yet again - the reliability of the onstage narrative transactions in the play.

32 Garvie, 1969, 105.
narratives must have helped to create the richness and profundity normally associated with the tragic genre.\(^\text{33}\)

Portent, prophecy, dream and curse all operate at a different narrative level from the continuing stage action. Whoever the onstage narrator may be, an ultimate source (for the dream, oracle etc.) is indicated whose authority, however unspecified, must be more than human. In this way the brief and linear stage action is opened out in space and time and made to seem in unity with the divine plan: in the plays of Aeschylus, linking the action to the will of Zeus. In the other playwrights the relationship of the action to the gods is left comparatively unclarified, or becomes problematic.

From a cognitive point of view, PPDCs provide the audience with material for interpretation as each scene and each lyric develops in an intricate pattern moving towards the end. They control the shaping of the story, its possible outcome and its movement towards closure. Any event in the play becomes heightened because it may be the moment at which the predicted fulfilment is beginning. As Herrnstein Smith writes, "our pleasure derives largely from the tension created by local deferments of resolution and evasions of expectation."\(^\text{34}\)

These pleasures only become available when a frame has been created from which such effects can depend, and it is typical of Greek tragedy that portent, prophecy, dream and oracle are strikingly and repeatedly used to create this frame.\(^\text{35}\) No study of tragedy using narrative theory could fail to pick out these features as a fundamental element of construction.

\(^{33}\)The use of emotion also qualifies Garvie's description of early tragedy. It is used in both lyric and trimeter sections to heighten tension and urge on the audience to interpret the action. Emotion also creates performance of various kinds: prayer, invocation, supplication, lament. In general terms fear may be associated with desis and grief with lusis, but this is too simplistic a formulation. More often, as in Ag, we see a complex interaction between hope and fear as the action progresses; similarly grief and relief can be closely interwoven, as at the end of Septem where the women are relieved that Thebes is saved while they mourn their dead.

\(^{34}\)Herrnstein Smith 1968, 3.

\(^{35}\)Mythical analogies work in the same way. When a choral ode refers to another story or stories, such as we find in the Danae ode at Ant. 944-987, or when it refers to an ancestor, such as Io in Supp., it is setting up at a different diegetic level a suggestively parallel narrative which tempts the audience to accommodate the new information to the main one. Prayers too point to a desired end which may or may not come about. All these elements can be thought of as (sometimes teasing) coordinates plotted on the learning curve of the play.
2.3 Portent, prophecy, dream and curse in combination with message narrative.

PPDC elements create a structure of expectation, mingled hopes and fears, towards a particular outcome. In a few plays, message narrative is positioned at the apex of a dramatic structure which has been largely built up by the use of PPDCs, and the message narrative specifically delivers that predicted outcome. A tremendous charge is created when this happens, and the combination of these two temporally-opposed sets of narrative in this particular way is intuitively experienced by layman (and perhaps expert alike) as constituting something centrally significant to the definition of "Greek tragedy." A list of such plays would include Sophocles' Theban plays and Electra (although a special case), Euripides' Hipp. and Bacchae.\(^6\) Listening to the lyric, dialogic and narrative sequences of these plays as they build up their familiar tragic pattern is comparable to the experience of following the movements of certain symphonies - the inevitability of the formal structure is in itself a powerful aesthetic effect.

The narrated sections derive strength, not weakness, from being narrated rather than enacted. The particular stillness and attention in which such messenger speeches have their being contribute to make the delivery of the messenger's speech one of the most intensely concentrated and moving parts of the play.

In this kind of play the messenger tends to arrive at the very centre of several different axes in the play. Firstly, the narrative describes a moment in which the divine design in human affairs manifests itself; it is revelatory in the religious sense that it tells us about the implications of a curse or an oracle, or a ritual transgression or a religious dilemma. Secondly, this revelation is coincidental with a climax in the developing action of the play; we might say it marks the moment at which desis becomes lusis.\(^7\) The coincidence of these two elements itself creates a strong sense of significance and inevitability. However, focussed as they are on the third element

\(^6\)No surviving play of Aeschylus works in quite this way. The closest parallel probably occurs in Sep. The way Aeschylus develops his narrative strategy is discussed in Chapter 4.

\(^7\)The conventional shaping of Attic drama will to some extent naturally give rise to a confluence of messenger narration with outcome: when a battle situation develops offstage or a crisis within the palace, the audience know they have to expect a messenger to tell them how it has been resolved. The sequence Trach. 672-722 shows this: Deianeira tells the chorus her fears about the anointed robe; 723-30 the chorus in distichomymia encourage her not to abandon all hope just yet, then announce the arrival of Hyllus. Hyllus necessarily recounts what the anointed robe has done. No other subject is at issue at this point in the play. See also OC. 1447-1555: this section immediately prepares the ground for Oedipus' exit to his end (the indications for which have been thoroughly established earlier). Left on their own, the chorus sing an ode to the chthonic gods (1556-78). The only question at issue for the audience at this point is how Oedipus has met his death: we must expect the messenger to tell the waiting chorus (and so us) what has happened.
- the suffering and destruction of a paradigmatic individual\textsuperscript{38} - the effect is profoundly moving.

### 2.4 PPDCs and closure

Sometimes PPDC elements are not used proleptically to create a climate of expectation leading up to the messenger speech. Instead, they are used to shape the material in the opposite direction, towards closure. They do this by absorbing present actions into the past. There is an interesting example of this at Trach. 1138ff. To exonerate his mother, Hyllus tells Heracles that she used a love charm given by Nessus. At the mention of Nessus, Heracles unexpectedly responds ἵππος ἵππος δύσπνος, ὁμοία τάλας...οίμοι, φρονώ δή ξυμφορᾶς ἵνα ἔσταιμεν. In his moment of recognition he abandons recriminations against Deianeira. It is time for him to abandon life, and the play moves towards dealing with this closing issue.

Heracles accounts for this new understanding of inevitable death by revealing a second oracle (1157-78) not previously mentioned in the play, one which is older than the first: long ago Zeus had told him that he would not perish by the hand of any living creature. Heracles brings this oracle into line (συμβαίνοντ' ἵσα, 1164) with the one he subsequently received at Dodona, to double the confirmation that he has now reached the end of his mortal life. His description of the Dodona oracle (1164-73), a subject we might have thought over and done with, is important because it links back to Deianeira's description (161-74), binding the separated husband and wife together in utterance of prophecy\textsuperscript{39}.

The references to the Dodona oracle earlier in the play (46ff., 76ff., 155ff.) had a clearly proleptic function, to help shape audience expectation towards the outcome of the action covered by the play. They offered a restricted either/or outcome. Either Heracles would die or he would come to the end of his labours (79-81, repeated with different phrasing 166-8).\textsuperscript{40} There was insistence on their immediate fulfilment one

\textsuperscript{38}Barlow, 1971, 77 writes contra: "Unlike monody or lyric the messenger speech is not primarily a mode of feeling ... The messenger's report ... permits first a factual assessment which contributes to the understanding. ... The full emotional impact ... is not released until the pitiable appearance of the survivors complements this preceding account." However, I think the messenger's presentation of "the facts" is in itself highly moving and our pity for eg. the blinded Oedipus is already aroused before we hear his groans or see the mutilated mask.

\textsuperscript{39}Furthermore it reminds us that before he last left her, Heracles had made some dispositions for his death (161-3), plans which he will now develop.

\textsuperscript{40}See Hester 1979, pp.12-17. He discusses the creation of false alternative outcomes in three Sophoclean plays, here in Trach, at Ant. 365-75 and at OT 873-82: his point is that an antithesis is created but the outcome will incorporate both alternatives (i.e. Heracles will die by coming to the end of his labours). He might well have looked to the false antithesis used by Aeschylus
way or the other after a fifteen-month period, now past (173-4). The obscuring way
the subject of this oracle was first raised as a "writing", and the discrepancy of
detail helped create a shadowy, complex web of uncertain predication. That the
dramatic function of this oracle is largely proleptic is confirmed by the fact that on
hearing the news of Heracles' destruction from Hyllus, its fulfilment is the first thing
the chorus sing about (first strophe of the third stasimon, 821ff.).

At this very late stage in the play the Dodona oracle is picked up again in association
with the earlier oracle, to put the entire action onto a larger frame: we are now
concerned with the shaping of Heracles' entire life, not merely its last months. There
is a tantalising inference from 1149-50 that under different circumstances we
would learn more of Zeus' prophecy to Heracles concerning the mysterious nature of
his death. Instead, we have only a brief account, together with his practical
instructions to Hyllus. As Easterling 1982 9-11 rightly remarks, the oracle and the
commands point towards some significance without in themselves clearly indicating
an apotheosis. The resultant procession offstage to Mount Oeta which closes the
play produces a typically Sophoclean open ending, in which new but indefinite lines
of perspective have been sketched in.

An oracle also produces closure in Pers., in a far less indefinite way than Trach.
Roberts 1984 33f. notes the reference Darius makes to old oracles (Pers. 739ff.),
which are only mentioned after the news of the Persian defeat at Salamis has been
announced. What is the point of the introduction of a PPDC element at this late date,
if not to create a sense of closure by the dawning of a new perspective? Xerxes'
defeat is now to be seen not so much as a shattering defeat in the very recent past, a
fit subject for the messenger's speech, but as the completion or fulfilment of an event
long ago foretold by the gods.

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eg. in Apollo's oracle in Cho, for an earlier example of this technique, which is an important narrative dolos frequently
employed in tragedy. See 50ff. and Section III on dolos.

4See Easterling's note ad Trach. 824-5
4Were Alcmena to be present: like Thetis for Achilles, she is necessarily the most concerned in her son's fate.
4We might contrast the veiled treatment of death here with the much more detailed but still mysterious account of the death of
Oedipus in Oe.
4Stinton's discussion (1986, pp. 67ff.) interestingly follows Easterling (1981, 56-72) in her survey of the historical
development of the tradition of Heracles' apotheosis, but he seems to believe that the merest suggestion of apotheosis would
spoil the end of this play, equating ambiguity with confusion and openness with dramatic failure - as though the ending of all
the rest of Sophocles plays produced a clear, unequivocal reading. See Roberts 1988.
SECTION TWO: NARRATIVE IN AESCHYLUS

Early tragedy consisted of "...little more than a messenger speech with lyric content." (Garvie, 1969, 105)

"...there is strikingly little in the way of messenger scenes in Aeschylus. They are characteristic of Sophocles and above all of Euripides, but not, it seems of earlier tragedy. Aeschylus expends his skill on diversifying his narrative elements, and there is no clear sign of any prototype for the familiar scenes of later tragedy." (Taplin 1977, 84-5)

άς τάς τραγωδίας τεμάχη εἶναι ἠλέγεν τῶν Ὄμηρον μεγάλους δεῖπνους. (Ath. viii. 347e)

CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVE SHAPING

3.1 General outlines

The surviving plays of Aeschylus, which all derive from a fourteen-year period at the end of his life, indicate that at the time he was composing the possibilities of dramatic form were comparatively unhardened into conventional practices.¹ He exhibits a diversity springing from unknown antecedents, while at the same time critics usually stress that Aeschylus himself was a great innovator.² It is significant for this study that his basic task was to convey the narratives of epic in an increasingly dramatic poesis.³

With so few plays surviving it is hard to trace this progress. Each play, whether or not we include PB,⁴ is very different. Aeschylus' use of the formal elements of

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¹Insofar as this was ever the case for a form which, for as long as we have direct evidence, exhibits continuous innovation and experimentation.
²eg. Else 83ff., who plots a nine-point development from Pers. through the remaining plays.
³Cf. Herington 1985, particularly 125-144.
⁴The play is of doubtful authenticity but is generally agreed to be within Aeschylus' ambience. For a survey of the evidence see Griffith 1977 and 1984, also Herington 1970.
tragedy is fluid, and the separation between lyric and trimeter, actor and chorus, is less clearly distinguished: while there are many examples of trimeter rheses with a narrative function, choral lyric is also used to convey information vital to an understanding of the plot. Only in Pers. are PPDC elements used in combination with sustained messenger speech narrative to promote anything like the sense of outcome described 29ff. The entire Oresteia lacks any kind of straightforward messenger speech. In the first two plays information is notoriously deceitful, defective and ambiguous. Supp. and Sep. both contain a brief messenger speech which pales into insignificance between the powerful lyrics which surround it on either side.

Portent, prophecy, dream and curse all occur at least as a mention and usually with great significance in five out of the seven surviving plays. Here we need to distinguish a frequent reference to PPDC elements from their use as more-or-less structural components of any given drama or, to put it in another way, between their narrative and non-narrative function. Thus while Cho. and Pers. include a major dream narrative, Ag. lacks one - despite abundant references to dreams and dream language.

Aeschylus’ proleptic narratives are often alternated with analeptic narratives of equal extent and these are often delivered by the chorus. The proleptic narratives usually do far more than point forward in a simple way to one definite action and its consequences, as in the case of Euripides. Then too, Aeschylus uses PPDC elements in a complex and continuing way with both ana- and pro-leptic elements to manipulate audience expectation and emotions. The eagles-hare portent is an example of this technique. The portent serves ambiguously both as a prediction of success at Troy and also as a symbol of dark causality stretching far into the future, since Artemis’ anger brings about the sacrifice of Iphigeneia with all its implications. In Cho. the dream snake is a complex symbol of ambiguity and deceit, as well as a prefiguring of Orestes’ murder of his mother.

The language of prophecy, interpretation and “reaching the goal” shapes and informs much Aeschylean tragedy, perhaps even more than the language of sacrificial ritual.

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2For a typology of these see Peretti 1939.
4There are two exceptions. The first is Eum., which deals with the aftermath of Clytemnestra’s curse. The play achieves closure by giving authority to Athena and “fixing” the Erinyes into the aetiology of the Areopagus. This creates strong lines of perspective away from the past, returning the audience to their present circumstances; the reference to the Argive alliance (see especially Eum. 767-71) which Orestes as a dead hero will safeguard also returns the audience to its own time. The second exception is Supp., first play of the Danaid trilogy. The lack of any proleptic narrative in this play is striking.
7See e.g. the discussions of Fraenkel vol. 2, pp. 97-9; Denniston and Page xxiv-xxvii.
does. In particular, the very structure of the *Oresteia* could be said to mimic the 

delivery of an oracle and its fulfilment. From many separate voices heard directly

and indirectly - the chorus, Calchas, Clytemnestra, *prophetai* of the house of Troy,

the Herald, the anonymous person who named Helen, Cassandra - the audience hear

authoritative pronouncements of various kinds (such as πάρθενος 

and they struggle to interpret and understand so as to reach the τέρμα or τέλος.

Aeschylus' use of particular narrative techniques in iambic trimeter, while obviously

a source-book for later dramatists, is equally hard to grapple with. His *rheisis* are 

diverse, idiosyncratic and often in catalogue form. He makes heavily-marked and 

self-referential use of narrative techniques but does so in a comparatively fluid way 

to serve the individual design of each play, rather than fitting them regularly to an 

extant template. Presumably because of the greater prestige of the *Oresteia*, some 

critics treat features found only there as standard Aeschylean practice and, given that 

it is the only complete trilogy, it is difficult to avoid the tendency to do this.

There is a particular narrative shaping in many of Aeschylus' plays which I feel is 

worth exploring: this is the creation of mighty central scenes based on the elaborate 

communication of significant information. The Cassandra scene of *Ag.*, the Io scene 

from *PB* and the shield scene of *Sep.*, each receive detailed discussion below. Each 

scene is unique and serves its context in its own play, but nonetheless shares 

significant similarities with the other two. All three are positioned at least half way 

into the play when many of the themes are already well-developed and a certain 

amount of tension has been created; the scenes build extensively on what has gone 

before and deliver a great deal of new and crucial information. The Io and 

Cassandra scenes, which both occur in late stages of the opening play of trilogies, 

convey important advance information which will carry through to the second play. 

Each scene is set up with a strong phatic frame and the element of *performance* is 

emphasised.

The Messenger's scene from *Pers.*, which I would not include in this category, is 

discussed separately.

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1Another candidate, the Darius scene of *Pers.* has been omitted for lack of space.

2cf. de Romilly 1968, pp. 72-3: "...quite often Aeschylus keeps for the center of his play the most distant "flashback" as we 

should say now, and joins it there with an anticipation and prediction about future events. So that the whole sequence of events 

stands there in the middle, as one great unity, where time's continuous course is gathered into a legible pattern."

3But see Griffith 1983, 281ff. for the view that *PB* is the middle play.

4The phatic function of communication is that which stresses "the psychophysiological connection between narrator and 

narratee" (Prince 1987, 71). See 77 nn. 53,54.

61ff.
The rest of this section will discuss in more detail the features of Aeschylean narrative just outlined, making a comparison with Euripides' technique where this illuminates Aeschylus', and picking out some of the distinctive ways in which, at different times, our earliest surviving playwright exploited different elements of the rich formal mix comprising *tragoidia* for his narrative purposes. The discussion is deliberately not cast in a developmental form. Given the complexity of the surviving work, it is clear that any kind of model that sets out to show diverse narrative techniques developing morphologically from initial simplicity is doomed to failure - even more so than attempts to show development in *dramatic* technique. Drama was, after all, a reasonably new form when Aeschylus was composing, but Homer's narrative mastery was always available, if it could somehow be adapted to the medium of drama.13

### 3.2 Scale, openings, focalisation, suspense and emotion

Aeschylus' plays typically have enormous narrative *reach* and *extent*,14 perhaps due to their origin in the expansive epic tradition; the *Oresteia* trilogy makes the huge move from the mythical period of the Trojan war to the foundation of the Court of the Areopagus in Athens, an institution familiar to the contemporary audience; the Theban trilogy, represented by *Sept.*, moves down three generations. Even the single play *Pers.* takes in the whole of Persian history from Zeus' grant to Medus (759ff.) to the battle of Plataea (817f.). The Danaid trilogy, inasmuch as it can be reconstructed, would appear to be exceptional in having a fairly short narrative extent: it would have dealt only with the single generation of Danaids in Argos over a brief, if

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1In converting from epic to tragedy Aeschylus could (theoretically) employ from Homer not only overall narrative strategies such as the order of presentation of events, omissions, delaying tactics, advance notices of the end and so forth, but also he could adapt direct speech narratives put into the mouths of heroes at various points (e.g. Nestor). In fact, narrative techniques could not help being also "cut off" with the slices that Aeschylus took from Homer's banquet. For a recent, inevitably generalised discussion of Aeschylus' debt to Homer see Herington 1985, 138-144 who, surveying the table of Aeschylus' works arranged according to mythological theme by Welcker and Mette, believes that Aeschylus may have set himself the task of attempting to reproduce in tragedy the entire corpus of cyclic poetry (135ff. and 139 with notes).

14*Reach* is defined as "the temporal distance between the story time covered by an anachrony and the "present" moment (or moment when the chronological recounting of a sequence of events is interrupted to make room for the anachrony). Genette 1980." (Prince). An example of this would be the temporal distance between the present time of Eurycleia washing Odysseus' feet and the earliest moment in the famous digression which culminates in the boar hunt. In fact there are several linked anachronies in this digression and the earliest one is the account of Autolycus' relationship with Hermes (*Od.* 19.396-8) which precedes even the account of his visit to Ithaca and the naming of his grandson. Extent, on the other hand, does not include the "present" or narrating moment at all and is defined as "the duration or amplitude of an anachrony or the story time covered by it. Genette 1980." (Prince) Using the same example, extent covers the entire series of anachronies from the earliest period of time just mentioned right up to the latest, which is Odysseus' return from the hunting trip to Ithaca and - delightful ending - his narration of his adventures at the boar hunt to his parents (462-6). The narrative *extent* of the digression is thus at least nineteen years shorter than its *reach.*
eventful, period of time. One assumes the Danaids are νόμωσι throughout. Even here, however, the frequent references in Supp. to Io and Zeus create a significant extension to the trilogy's overall timespan.

The very gradual way Aeschylus opens up his huge narratives seems an important strategy typical of every play. The massive scale is never flagged at the outset by using PPDC elements in prologues and opening scenes to give a synoptic, unifying view across the separate action of each play. Instead, Aeschylus prefers to involve us in a complex hermeneutic process, lifting only a corner of the veil, as it were. He begins by showing us a tense situation focalised through a stage figure or figures characterised by expectation and fear and perhaps faced with a crucial dilemma. He emphasises their ignorance and both we and his stage figures are variously brought to a position of knowledge only after a lengthy and involving process which takes up much of the play. Great ἐκπληξία is created in the shocking moment when the climax of this process is reached and knowledge attained. Shaping the narrative material in this way brings us to a consideration of "suspense."

Suspense may be Aeschylus' greatest contribution to the development of drama. The effects he creates are almost synonymous with drama itself and the general view of what is meant by "the dramatic." Suspense is arguably created on all possible fronts at every level, as if this was the main effect at which Aeschylus was aiming. Not all of the suspense-arousing strategies can be discussed here: for example there is no space to deal with complex and overlapping patterns of predication created by riddles, puns and paronomasia, or the use of archaic vocabulary with its loaded implications (the language of ἕβρις, κότος, ἀτε etc.), or prayers and foreshadowing expressions of hope and fear; these are all certainly relevant but take us too far from the main topic.

It seems absolutely typical of Aeschylus' narrative strategy that while Phrynichus' play on the collapse of Persia, Phoenissae, probably performed in 476, began by acknowledging the obvious fact of the defeat at Salamis, Aeschylus in Pers. begins by

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15We have noted already, however, that for Aeschylus message narrative does not play such a crucial role in the process of building towards revelation, as it does for the other playwrights.

16An emotion or state of mind arising from a partial and anxious uncertainty about the progression or outcome of an action, especially one involving a positive character", Prince 1987, 94-5. On suspense see also Bal 1985, 114-5 and Pfister 1988, 98-102.

17See Herington 141-2, "At creating suspense in a plot, Aeschylus is by common consent one of the greatest masters of them all... The heroic episode must be so treated that it will not flow at the same even pace but with mounting speed and excitement, towards a climax which will fall near or at its end." See also Else 1985, 78-102.

making it a crucial but open question. Atossa's dream is created specifically as a
vehicle for highlighting and prolonging the ignorance of the stage figures. The main
thrust of the play indeed in all but the last scene, is to build up and sustain suspense
so as to make critically important the effect of the news of defeat as it "breaks" on the
living and dead members of the royal house of Persia. Making an uncertainty out of a
known fact and resurrecting a dead man onto the stage to hear about it, are both
examples of extraordinary, almost perverse, ways of handling the given material.

In the rest of his plays too, which deal with mythical subjects, Aeschylus sets about
re-inventing the relationship between the audience and a familiar story. Our own
familiarity with the plays should not make us underestimate the extreme boldness at
times of the framing techniques which help to get the audience to "forget" (at some
level) story material which it in fact knows very well (and could indeed narrate in its
own right in other circumstances). Audiences would have specific knowledge to
draw on (Jason always goes off in the Argos and finds the Golden Fleece), as well as a
sense of the pattern of the story in a general way (heroes must overcome mighty
opposition and jealous women are extremely dangerous). How can an audience be
made to forget what it knows?

There is the point that in epic the bard's activity is frequently described as one in
which events of the past are remembered or recalled, with the aid of the Muses who
represent recollection. Given the "forest of myths" with their local sub-species and
larger inter-connections, it is likely that the average member of the public should not
have immediate, clear recall of all the stories to do with all the heroes; the poet is the
expert in this respect. In submitting their attention to the poet's narrative, the
audience of epic seem also to be thought of as in some way subjecting the content of
their own memories to the temporary control of a higher authority.

If this seems far-fetched, theoretical distinctions of various kinds can help show how
this response is possible: first, the simple but fundamental distinction between story
(histoire) and discourse (discours). Structuralist theory has usefully argued that each
narrative consists of two parts: a story, which is the content or chain of events
together with existents (eg. characters or items of setting), plus a discourse, that is,
the expression or means by which the content is communicated. "In simple terms, the
story is the what in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the how." Thus an

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18For attempts to anatomise story patterns see e.g. Propp 1968, Lattimore 1964. Much of the work of Greimas was devoted to
estabishing the structures which make narrative universally comprehensible: see e.g. Greimas and Ricoeur 1989, 551-62.
audience familiar with the story can nonetheless still be played upon by all manner of
techniques employed in its discourse.

Secondly, there is a useful recent distinction made between the world of the theatre
and the world of the drama and this distinction associates very closely with
Rabinowitz' quite separate suggestion that audiences or narratees have their own
"morphology." To simplify his ideas, any audience obviously consists of flesh and
blood individuals, reacting in their own individual and group ways. The theoretical
"narrator" of any drama may however address himself to either of two theoretical
narratees (usually co-existent within the same spectator). First, the authorial
audience, a group of people with a similar cultural and historical background to the
author himself, people well equipped to appreciate his metatheatrical references to
other plays, recent political events etc.. Second, the narrative audience. To address
this audience, the narrator is inevitably involved in pretence and imitation. The
narrator addresses an audience of people who pretend to believe the fictive world is
real (gods appear and speak to humans, for example). Drama would not work
without some temporary measure of "willing suspension of disbelief", a level of
forgetting some facts and assenting to the validity of others. This faculty is aroused
by stimulating the narrative audience.

From our historical position at the end of the second millenium, we need the benefit
of scholarship to enable us to make even a partial entry into the authorial world;
however, some level of difficulty must be encountered with all literature which is not
of our own age or addressed to our own cultural group. Fifth-century Athenian
audiences were also, if to a lesser extent, dislocated from the authorial world of
Homer (to the extent that Homer's world ever does represent a distinct historical
period). It seems that audiences frequently have to pretend in order to play the part of
authorial audience as well.

All ancient dramatists in the course of a tragoidia appeal to both authorial and
narrative audience in order to create a range of effects, now appealing directly to our
sympathy for the stage figures in their predicament, now, with a self-reference,
reminding us that we are watching a play, that we know other versions of this
story. The audience may be consciously aware of the sheer beauty of an ode. The
combination of, and gap between, these effects (often strong enough to produce

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23cf. Easterling 1991 for an analysis of the subtle interplay in Hipp in between the theatre and drama worlds.
physical symptoms - extreme stillness, tears to the eyes, involuntary gasps, bristling of hairs) produces the extraordinary experience of watching tragedy. A watching audience is in a liminal condition in which it is susceptible to all sorts of suggestion. Shakespeare's Chorus to Henry V appeals to the audience's suggestibility directly: "Suppose that you have seen ... Play with your fancies; and in them behold ... hear ... behold ... O, do but think You stand upon the rivage and behold... Follow, follow ... Work, work your thoughts and therein see ... behold ... Suppose..." (Act 3 Prologue). In fact the direct appeal to the audience to pretend and imagine - largely the function of the narrative audience - is, by a typical paradox, a distancing effect which also makes a strong appeal to the knowing authorial audience, the one well able to appreciate the ardent bravura, dash and cumulative imperatives of this highly rhetorical speech.

It is Aeschylus' particular trick to create opening suspense by starting in a small way with a narrow focus and a high emotional charge, a technique calculated to give immediate stimulus to the narrative audience. He gives little sense of what the structure of the play will be like overall, but the question of an end point is raised early on and is identified as the subject of much hope and fear. Some verses have an elaborate linguistic texture in which PPDC elements, ἀγγελία and physical symptoms of fear are densely interwoven. Through his choruses Aeschylus is bold enough even to suggest how they and we might feel suspense physically:

\[
\text{άμφι δὲ νόστωι τῷ βασιλείῳ}
\]
\[
\text{kαὶ πολυχρόσου στρατιάς ήδη}
\]
\[
\text{kακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσοπολεῖται}
\]
\[
\text{θυμὸς ἔσωθεν.}
\]
\[
\text{...}
\]
\[
\text{κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἵππες}
\]
\[
\text{ἄστυ τὸ Περσῶν ἄφικνεῖται... (from Pers. 8-15)}^{25}
\]

24It is customary to talk about "pleasure" here. Aristotle Po. 1448b Ch. 4 asserts that tragic pleasure results from its mimetic properties, since τὸ μυθῶθα ὑμμυμνον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παῖδων ἐστι; learning by identification, as he goes on to say, is a basically pleasurable human activity. If this seems inadequate, modern psychanalytic theories tend to focus on the notion of catharsis. See Po. 1449b Ch. 6 for the definition that tragedy works "through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis (purification/purgation clarification) of such and similar emotions", δὲ ἔλεος καὶ φόβον περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων. For a discussion of catharsis and closure see Segal, Euripides and the Poetics of sorrow, chs. 1 and 2 (forthcoming).

25See Thalmann 1986 for an investigation of the faculties of phrenes, thumos and kardia in Aeschylus. This passage and the two below in their highly imagistic way seem to evoke the symptoms of an active adrenalin system.
This way of beginning could not be more different from the opening strategy of Euripides, who will be used as a foil to Aeschylus in the ensuing discussion. All Euripides' tragedies\(^{26}\) begin with a single intra- or extradiegetic narrator delivering a clear expository prologue at a heterodiegetic level, almost invariably followed by a dialogue at the normal narrative level of the play\(^{27}\) (often between the first figure and another, although sometimes between two fresh characters). Usually it is only when these two sections have been completed that the chorus enter. In this way, even before the situation proper of tragedy has been visually established, a synopsis of the plot has been delivered and is already in the process of being developed. This is an extremely swift, economic way of transferring information and getting the action under way.\(^{28}\)

\(^{26}\)With the possible exception of \(\text{IA}\); the internal evidence does not make clear which of the two apparently competing openings should be discarded, and we cannot be certain that Euripides was not attempting a different kind of beginning. See Page 130ff., and more recently Neitzel "Prolog und Spiel in der euripidischen \(\text{IA}\), " Ph. 131 1987, 185-233 and Guenter, "Textprobleme im Prolog der Aulischen Iph. des Eur.,” WJA 13 1987, 59-74.

\(^{27}\)Not the case in \(\text{TW}\), where the dialogue is between Athena and Poseidon.

\(^{28}\)This identical patterning may be followed chronologically through Euripides' plays. Thus we find that \(\text{Alc}\), begins with Apollo 1-27, then Apollo and Thanatos argue 38-76; \(\text{Med.}\) with Nurse 1-48 who is then in dialogue with the Tutor 49-130 (Medea heard lamenting inside 96-7 and 111-114. \(\text{Held}\), begins with Iolaus 1-54, joined by Eurystheus' Herald 55-72. \(\text{Hipp.}\) is on a slightly different pattern, beginning with Aphrodite 1-57; she withdraws as Hippolytus approaches singing and only just ahead of the chorus of Huntsmen. \(\text{And.}\) is the familiar pattern: Andromache speaks on her own 1-55 and is joined by an attendant 56-116. \(\text{Hec.}\) begins with Polydorus' ghost 1-58 and Hecabe sings a monody in lyric anaepasts 59-97 before the chorus enter using regular or marching anaepasts. \(\text{Supp.}\) has Aethra 1-41 followed immediately by the chorus; \(\text{Her.}\) begins with Amphitryon 1-59 followed by a dialogue with Megara 60-106. The next three plays insert a monody by the protagonist into the prologue, which then involves simultaneous entries and exits and a situation of solo lyric followed immediately by choral. The start of \(\text{Fl.}\) is particularly complex: the Peasant sets the scene 1-53, followed by dialogue with Electra 54-81. The stage is then occupied by Orestes and Pylades 82-111; Electra sings a monody 112-166 and is only then joined by the chorus. \(\text{TW}\) begins with Poseidon 1-47 joined by Athena 48-97; Hecabe then sings alone 98-152 until joined by the chorus. Hermes beings \(\text{Ion}\) 1-81 and, like Aphrodite in \(\text{Hipp.}\), disappears before the arrival of Ion, who sings alone 82-183. The opening situation of \(\text{It}\) is similar to that of \(\text{Fl.}\) in that Orestes and Pylades must be introduced to the audience and so must the sister - but not together. Iphigenia opens the opening speech 1-66, giving way to Orestes and Pylades who are presented in dialogue, 67-122. Chorus begins 123. \(\text{Hel.}\) begins with Helen herself 1-67, joined by Teucer 68-163. After a brief transition she begins to sing and is joined in the antistrophoe by the chorus at 179. \(\text{Pho.}\) begins with Jocasta 1-87; she gives way to Antigone and her Tutor in a lyric \(\text{teichoscoopia}\) scene 88-201 (in fact framed by iambic trimeters from the Tutor at beginning and end), followed by the chorus. Electra opens \(\text{Or}\) 1-70 beside Orestes' sick-bed and is joined by Helen in dialogue 71-139; she then joins the chorus in a lyric sequence. Dionysus opens \(\text{Bach.}\) 1-63, followed immediately by the chorus of Lydian maenads he has summoned.
Although Euripides' prologue-speaker does not use vocatives and second person verbs, the lack of any other visible narratee means that audience is all but directly addressed.\(^{29}\) This is the case whether the figure is human or divine, and whether or not they are involved in the subsequent action of the play. Such metatheatrical treatment, in which the audience is provided with a kind of \textit{didaskalos}, makes an appeal to the authorial audience and contrasts strikingly with the very subjective focalisation of the opening characters of Aeschylus: the anxiety of the chorus in \textit{Pers.}, the crisis Eteocles must deal with in \textit{Sep.}, the emotional watchman who has waited so long for news in \textit{Ag.}, Orestes with his prayers and uncertainties in \textit{Cho.}. Ironically, the Pythia in \textit{Eum.} begins in expository fashion - but this soon gives way to terror. \textit{Supp.} 1-39 in some ways comes closest to a Euripidean prologue\(^{30}\) for its comparatively direct exposition. However, the sheer bulk of lyric and dialogue that then intervenes before the arrival of Pelasgus at 234 is most un-Euripidean, as are the formalities of recognition that ensue before the issue of asylum is discussed. It is typical of Aeschylus to delay definitive action too.

### 3.3 Typical progression

If we continue to highlight Aeschylus' practice by contrasting it with Euripides', it is clear that operating from the bridge-head created by the prologue-speaker, Euripides can manipulate a range of narrative developments by varying the extent of future action revealed. In some of his plays the external narrator explicitly controls the entire course of the action: his divine prologue-speakers have absolute power (barring Zeus' ultimate authority) which they use to drive humans to their ruin. There may also be a concluding \textit{deus} figure who, in a narrative which enforces closure, confirms the overwhelming effect of the will of the gods. The outstanding examples of this are \textit{Hipp.}, set between Aphrodite and Artemis, \textit{Ion}, set between Hermes and

\(^{29}\)This statement is not meant to be in any way connected with the narrative situation of \textit{Sep.} 1-38, since it is outside any known tragic convention that the audience understood themselves addressed, faute de mieux, as \textit{Καδμων πολέμων:} here one must follow Taplin's suggestion (129ff.) that a token crowd accompanied him onstage.

\(^{30}\)\textit{Vice versa}, the Euripidean opening which comes closest to the creation of Aeschylean suspense must be \textit{Med.}: rather like the chorus of \textit{Ag.}, the Nurse is used both as a narrator of the past and as a reflector of current suspense and fear. She has an authoritative voice when it comes to describing the past; here the voyage of the \textit{Argo} and the murder of Pelias. Like the chorus of \textit{Ag.} too, she can only fear for the future. In the present circumstances of Jason's defection she observes things that are wrong about her mistress: \textit{συνήγα χαλάδος} (36), \textit{βορεῖα γῆς φημί} (38: Diggle brackets the text of 37-44). When the Tutor gives the news of banishment, the atmosphere darkens and the Nurse pointedly withholds a curse against Jason (83). His lack of paternal feelings is noted at 88, and Medea's unmaternal anger coupled with an idea of a forthcoming act (100-10). It is important to keep the children out of Medea's sight. At 112 Medea curses them (see 83) and the Nurse again expresses her fears. Thus before Medea's greatly delayed entry onstage (at 214) an enormous amount of suspenseful fear for the childrens' fate is created, an emotion which we carry with us throughout the rest of the action until the infanticides eventually occur 127ff.
Athena, and Bacch., the action of which is framed between Dionysus' two manifestations. The action is determined at the beginning, and redetermined at the end. Where the external predication is so strong we tend to see the human stage figures with pity but from a distance.

However, Euripides also composed plays (such as those beginning with a scene of supplication, eg. Held., And., Supp., Her., Hel.) which do not offer much of a narrative at the outset to take us beyond the resolution of the opening crisis. Even here, too, however, the manner of development into a new dramatic situation is still totally unlike Aeschylus. In such situations a Euripidean character will give a heterodiegetic "statement of intent" rhesis, which functions very like a second prologue, simply linking what went before with what comes next. I am thinking here for example, of Heracles, ALC. 837ff.; Medea, MED. 1236ff.; the Nurse, AND. 802ff.; Iris and Lyssa, HER. 822ff..

This Euripidean way of proceeding, in which past events can be readily supplemented by new, shows a radically different, more casual approach to narrative time compared with the practice of both Aeschylus and Sophocles. These two playwrights typically structure plots in which the passage of time is crucial: in the course of their plays we are often shown characters enmeshed and ultimately overwhelmed by events which began long ago. Gaining an understanding of the past, often in terms of the significance of a PPDC element, is in many ways the "work" of the entire play.

Given that time in this sense is of critical importance to the structure of Aeschylus' dramas, interference with its natural sequence is thus a crucial tactic to arouse suspense. His plays typically develop an alternation of truncated ana- as well as proleptic narratives, setting up a narrative pendulum which swings repeatedly and tantalisingly to and fro over the "now" of the present to focus instead on selected events in the past or future, both of which are (at first) only to be glimpsed at.
Aeschylus' narratives of the past are experienced as crucial to gaining an understanding of the present. Aeschylean choruses, often the embodiment of traditional wisdom, refer present problems to the mythic past of their own communities: the past explains the present because it is post hoc ergo propter hoc. Narrative, with its culturally approved repetitions, is paradigmatic and can indicate the future too. Aeschylus exploits this implicit function of narrative in the technique of paratactic juxtaposition. It associates extremely well with some of his other narrative practices such as deceit and delay to create a highly idiosyncratic hermeneutic structure.

The chronological pendulum can be demonstrated well in any play, but is particularly marked in Ag. Early on the τέλος of the action is presented as Agamemnon's return, and the temporal extent of the action is thus set up as reaching from news of return to return itself. We know the beacon has been seen (22ff.) but we go back repeatedly to the setting out of the expedition ten years earlier. Further embedded into Calchas' interpretation of the portent is the so-called "hymn to Zeus" which takes us back to the earliest time of all, when the universe was created by Ouranus and Cronos. Now we swing forward again to the previous night when Troy fell (264ff.) In the following ode (355-487) we move back to a period before the ten years' war when Paris broke the laws of hospitality by seducing Helen, and forward to a virtual present where young Greeks lie dead around the city walls. Again, we look forward to the moment of Agamemnon's return. The Herald tells us more about the recent victory and about the fragmentation of Menelaus' ships. This prompts the chorus to return into the past again with an allusive narrative beginning with the shadowy figure who gave Helen her name (68ff.), presumably at her birth, although they do not say so. Before Agamemnon is persuaded over the carpet, Clytemnestra insists on describing her ten years of waiting for her husband (85ff.).

Cassandra's scene is one of those particular central scenes in which narratives of future and past are brought together and a wider, more panoramic vision allowed: in a disjointed sequence which leaps to and fro through time (as it does between the two cities of Troy and Argos) the prophetess touches on a wide range of past and future events many of which have not yet been brought into the consciousness of the play. I

the choruses and some of the speeches too .. yet all of these converge on Agamemnon's death-cry."

34See eg. the repeated invocations of Zeus and Io by the Danaids in Supp., the panoramic knowledge of the house of Labdacus shows Sep. 720-91. It is interesting that only in the Oresteia (and then only in its second half when the narrative is moving gradually out of the distant mythical past into a more modern period) does Aeschylus allow the chorus to admit any knowledge of other myths. The paradigmatic ode of Cho. 585 (πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ τρέφετε δεσπότους θέται κ.λ.), is actually unique in extant Aeschylus for its external focalisation and timeless narrative stance.

35The cities have already been linked, however, by Clytemnestra in her beacon speech.
cite them in chronological order rather than by place or in the order in which they appear: first in the sequence is the protarchos ate, when Thyestes committed adultery with Atreus' wife, the feast of his own children prepared in revenge, Cassandra's childhood in Troy and her association with Apollo, the Furies presently in the house, the two murders that are about to take place, Orestes' return.

It is only at this stage in the play that any material is given us with which we could construct a future for the trilogy; even so, information leading to an idea of closure is still largely withheld. (Similarly at the end of PB we have some idea of the leverage over Zeus that will enable Prometheus to be released, but inconsistencies are left unresolved.) All the same, 1279-85 does constitute a virtual synopsis of the action of Cho.: 

οὐ μὴν ἄτιμοι γ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν τεθνηξομεν·
ήξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἁλλος αὐ τιμάρος,
μητροκτόνον φίτωμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός.
φυγὼς δ᾽ ἄλητης τῆς ἡ γῆς ἀπόξενος
κάτεισιν ἄτας τάσσε δρυγκόσσαν36 φίλοις.
ὅμωμαται γὰρ ὅρκος ἐκ θεῶν μέγας,
ἀξειν νῦν ἡπτίασμα κειμένου πατρός.

Eventually Agamemnon is murdered and the here and now takes over. But Clytemnestra ranges over the past in justification of her deed, and the typical see-saw effect continues right to the end: only in the final scene does Aegisthus supply a full narrative of the significant rivalry in the previous generation between Atreus and Thyestes. Euripides' Thyestes, we can imagine, would have begun with it.37

3.4 Prophecies and dreams in the hermeneutic structure and in persuasion, confirmation, recognition. Trilogies.

The way dreams and oracles functioned in fifth century society is beyond the scope of this study.38 Their use in narratives is of a different order. All PPDCs, but

36 Cf. similar expressions E. Her. 1280 δῶμα θριγκόσα κακοῖς and TW 489 θριγκόσα δολίων κακῶν: in these examples there is the idea of "capping" an entire structure, in the sense of completing it. θριγκόσαν then points (perhaps ironically) as far forward as closure at the end of the trilogy.
37 The remaining fragments cannot help confirm this statement: see Nauck frs. 391-7 and Webster 1967 113-5 for a discussion of some possibilities for the structure.
38 For oracles see Fontenrose 1978 and studies of Herodotus by e.g. Crahay 1956, also Roberts 1984. For dreams see White on Artemidorus 1975, and van Lieshout 1980. The earliest written evidence for dream interpretation goes right back to c.2000
particularly dreams and oracles, are well established as narrative devices in Homer. They give any poet an unparalleled opportunity to step outside the diegetic time of the narrative and make free movements into past and future. Homer makes cumulative prophetic statements about Troy's fall and Achilles' death, and these control our response and give the poem its shape and tragic colouring. The statements also give the poem a profound sense of closure, despite the incompleteness of the action of the war covered by the poem. Oracles themselves tell of τά τ' ἔοντα τά τ' ἔσσομενα πρό τ' ἔοντα (II. 1.70). They are "a statement of plot". The commission of their commands and the always unavoidable fulfilment of their prohibitions are in accordance with clear narrative rules. They are thus also an important hermeneutic device, capable of inspiring intense mental activity in the audience. Fulfilment of an oracle requires that "events, properly understood, fit the oracle, also properly understood." 

The opening rheseis of Euripides' prologue-speakers tend to have infallible authority and to be virtually indistinguishable from prophecies except in having a dramatic rather than oracular context. With this technique, there is clearly less need for separate and subsequent PPDC elements, and their comparative lack in Euripides' plays confirms this. Aeschylus makes great use of PPDC elements to shape his dramas and give them suspense. Like Homer, he allows them to accumulate and converge on a fixed point, as may be seen particularly well in Sep. and Cho. However, his practice is to create a particular emotional climate first before they are introduced. Thus the chorus of Pers. are full of foreboding even before Atossa has told them of her dream (and, 

B.C. (Brit.Mus. papyrus 10683). The dreams are divided into two groups according to whether they denote good or bad outcomes. Fifth-century opinion on the validity of dreams is very difficult to ascertain but it may well be that, as now, there were attitudes across the complete spectrum, from downright sceptics through those accepting rationalisations of dreams, to those adopting positions of extreme faith in their prophetic power. Herodotus lists 33 dreams and makes great play with the inevitability of their outcome, but this is part of his narrative strategy. Thucydides has none. In Ar. Pol. 9, 512A we find the statement, "Dreams originate in man's material part: it sees and yearns after it knows not what, it remembers the past, discerns the present and foresees the future." 

39Lattimore 1964 72.
40See p.28 and nn. 30 & 31.
41Roberts, 1984, 23.
42E.g. Apollo Alc. 64-71 (though Euripides cleverly diminishes the resonance of this speech by giving Thanatos the last word), or Aphrodite's un equivocal τιμωρήσει τ' ἔκδολουν ἐν τῇ διήμερο (Hipp. 21-2).
43In Euripides' surviving tragedies, major dreams occur only in Hec. and IT. The only major curse is Theseus' in Hipp. (flagged by Aphrodite 43-6). An interesting use of prophecy occurs Pho. 834ff., which perhaps confirms Euripides' general avoidance of PPDCs as structural elements. In this curiously self-contained scene, prophecy brings about an immediate suicidal action - the self-sacrifice of Menoeceus which is supposed to save the city. In fact it does not seem to save the city and subsequent references to the deed of sacrifice are extremely brief (see Craik 1988 ad loc.).
44So does Herodotus. Cf. Croesus' downfall, predicted by an ancient Pythian prophecy, three oracles to Croesus himself and a portent (Hdt. 1.13, 53, 55, 85, 78).
paradoxically, once they have heard the dream narrative with its fairly clear presentiment of disaster, their belief in a 50-50 chance of success is restored. The female choruses of Sep. (78-180, 287-368), despite the enormous amount of proleptic material at issue in the play (of which they later show deep understanding), are depicted fearing the future directly, not in fact because of any oracle they have heard. The intricate, overlapping images of vultures and eagles sung by the chorus of Ag.. develop the foreboding atmosphere but do not yet prepare the audience for any specific outcome. In Cho., Clytemnestra's dream and Apollo's oracle seem at the outset to be merely added to the situation of watchful tension already created by Orestes' return.

In each case the foreboding world of the play has already been created, and the predictive material is presented through the internal focalisation of a stage figure rather than by an external one as a guide to the whole action; the oracle or dream develops the atmosphere by feeding into the fear or expectations of the protagonist. Yet, however feeble or ignorant the narrator, the message itself is most certainly understood by the authorial audience as a guide to the action. The PPDC element gives the audience a sense of structure and direction: in Pers., the Queen's dream is followed by the Messenger's news which explains it, and Darius' recall of prophecies gives perspective to Xerxes' final lament. In the Oresteia, Cassandra's predictions in the second half of Ag. are an important preview of Cho.. Apollo's oracle in Cho. is only resolved at the end of the entire trilogy. Any reading of Sep. must stand or fall by the great irruption of PPDC elements into the central scene. One reason why Supp. is so hard to interpret is that there are no PPDC elements to give it a shape.

In epic narrative Homer had already richly developed the ironic implications of PPDC elements, making use of the discrepant awareness between the internal characters as well as between internal and external audience on receipt of the message. A notable example in Iliad 2 is the deceitful Oulos Oneiros - sent by Zeus to deceive Agamemnon and favour the Trojans - with its resultant chaos as Agamemnon attempts to deal craftily with it. There is a delightful irony in the dissembling of narrator and narratee here, and in the different part played by "Nestor" the dream figure (23-34) and Nestor the canny councillor (79-83) in the sequence of scenes relating to the dream. The dream of Penelope (Od. 19. 535ff.) is similarly most intricately surrounded by decepts and indications of ambiguity. Penelope's dream, as she narrates it to her husband in ignorance of his identity, is all too simple in its meaning, and has in fact been clearly interpreted within the dream itself by the eagle figure, when Penelope (still within the dream) weeps because her
geese have been slaughtered. The dream thus includes its own interpretation, and Odysseus has merely to confirm that "Odysseus himself" (556) has spoken to her. However, Penelope does not accept this. She makes the mysterious remarks about the origin of dreams from the gates of horn or the gates of ivory: dreams are ὁμήχανοι ἀκριτέμυθοι (11.560) and the ones from the ivory gates bring no fulfilment. Her conversation takes a different turn.

Penelope's dream gates are extremely interesting. In narrative terms her statement is simply not true: like oracles, all dreams in narrative operate by fixed rules: they are infallible pointers to the future, even if the dreamer only understands at the moment of fulfilment. Her sad remarks delicately highlight the level of deceit which her husband must continue to operate against her. We enjoy the fact that she is ignorant of the procedural rules of the narrative in which she is a character. Athena gives Odysseus and Telemachus outright proleptic information, and with this additional help they are better able to shape their own narrative ends.

From Odysseus' and the listeners' point of view, the dream narrative is an image representing Odysseus' defeat over the suitors. It is highly pleasing that the dream finds an immediate context for fulfilment in the next subject Penelope takes up, the contest of the bow. She mentions it with gloom, since for her it represents the unwelcome selection of a new husband. But the dream has already suggested that the outcome will be everything she could desire. Odysseus can take the "second hand" dream dreamt by his wife as a good omen applicable to his own situation, in the same way that Orestes takes his mother's dream in Cho. - with less fortunate results.

Aeschylus seems very much influenced by Homer's use of PPDCs. Exploiting drama's inherent lack of narrator and omniscient focalisation, his PPDCs, even more than Homer's, can create great tragic effects of irony and of knowledge coming all too late. In addition, the actual substance of the dream usually has strong symbolic/thematic importance.

Atossa's dream of Xerxes' attempt to yoke Europe and Asia cannot fail to be understood by the audience as a prediction of Persian failure, and the chorus' open verdict on it must be perceived ironically. Apart from the audience's historical knowledge, the chorus' own earlier presaging words strongly invite a negative

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44This continuing thematic importance contrasts, for example, with the simpler functional use Euripides makes of the stylus with hair and voice in Iphigenia's dream (IT, 50ff.) which she takes to represent her brother. This pillar is the "only one remaining from the ruin of my father's house," and so is appropriate enough as a symbol for Orestes. It does not have thematic importance for the whole play as the snake does in Cho.
interpretation. But the fact that the stage figures treat the dream as an entirely ambiguous, even neutral communication is part of established dramatic convention: it is exactly what Clytemnestra does in both Cho. and S. El.46

This dream narrative also initiates motifs which the audience will only later understand. After the violent action described 194-6 there is a curiously static, frieze-like quality about the figures at 197-9. They have the quality of a dumb-show. The Queen describes Darius pitying his son and Xerxes tearing his garments when he sees his father. These are not mere decorative details to create a border around the main image of the dream: in fact, the figure of Darius briefly prepares for the scene 681ff., in which he unexpectedly rises from the dead, pitying his son (ὁ μέλεος, 733), while the motif of Xerxes' rags47 will be re-introduced again and again in the subsequent movement of the play (see 469, 832-6, 845-51, 1017, 1030), culminating in the final appearance of the ruined king, his ragged finery symbolising the state of Persia.48

In Cho. we find another rich imagistic movement from dream through dream image to onstage presence - or virtual, hallucinatory presence. Orestes explicitly interprets his mother's dream and identifies himself as the snake in it: ἐκδρακοντωθείς δ’ ἐγὼ κτείνω νῦν (549-50). This interpretation is confirmed by Clytemnestra at 927-8: οἷς τεκνόθα τόνδ’ ὅφειν ἐθρηνάμην· ἡ κάρτα μάντις οὐχ ὀνειράτων φόβος. At the time this appears to be the moment of insight, or anagnorisis on Clytemnestra's part which completes the relevance of the dream and the snake to the play. But Aeschylus' dream snake is in fact a slippery motif of multiple relevance and still has an important part to play: at 1047 the chorus praise Orestes for having freed Argos by "easily cutting off the heads of two snakes" (1046-7), thus reversing the attribution of snakiness and moving it away from Orestes himself to his enemies. But even this is

46Clytemnestra refers to "δεσσον" διέγερσι, S.El.645. Euripides introduces some variants to Hecuba's interpretation of her dream: before the tragic revelation she twice poignantly guesses wrong, supposing the identity of Polydorus' sheeted corpse to be first Polyxena, then Cassandra (671, 676-7).

47Taplin 1977, makes much of the emblematic significance of rags to represent the decline of Persia. He emphasises the opening grandeur of the Queen's chariot entry and contrasts it with her humbler second entry on foot (cf. Pers. 607ff: τοιγόρ κέλευθον τῇδ' ἄνευ τ’ ὀχημάτων χείλεσις τ’ τῆς κάρος ἐκ δόμων πάλιν χείλεσι). "One may fairly ask what would be the point of not representing them (the rags) naturalistically ... Is there any point in not using costume visually and verbally?" (1977, 36). Gould, however, (CHCL vol. 1 p. 279) argues on the basis of vase evidence for a consistently rich and elaborate tragic costume: with reference to Euripides he talks of a "language of degradation" about clothing which Aristophanes' jokes could readily exploit in literal terms (cf. E. El. 184ff., Hel. 415ff., 554). It seems to me that Xerxes' costume could fulfill all conditions required of it (except Taplin's unlikely "naturalism"), by having embroidered or painted on it extensive representations of tears etc., while still remaining extremely rich and elaborate in its material. Such a costume could well be referred to as rags.

48It is interesting that Anderson (G&R Studies: Greek Drama, edd. McAuslan and Walcot, 1993, pp. 29-37) is tempted to believe that Darius (despite χαράπετε, 840) does not in fact exit but remains onstage in silence throughout the final scene, thus turning the symbolic figures of Atossa's dream into onstage reality.
not the final image: at the very end, when Orestes sees the Furies he discovers that they are wreathed with snakes, πελεκτανμέναι πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν, 1049-50, creatures which are increasing in number at 1057. So, after representing the righteous avenger, snakes then become a symbol of the Furies and the terror they inspire.

The multiple valency of the dream snake in Cho. (like the notion of web/robe in both the first two plays of this trilogy) helps create a sense of the ambiguity of retributive action. In both Pers. and Cho., elements in the dream thus operate beyond the surface interpretation as a subtle "trailer" for future events in the play.

The oracle in Cho. is not mentioned until Orestes tells Electra and the Chorus about it (269ff.). Its first mention is set after the lyric presentation of Clytemnestra's dream (32ff.) and before its apparently lucid exposition and interpretation (526-552). Dream and oracle intertwine and build cumulatively towards the matricide, the main action of this play - and beyond to its aftermath and final resolution at the end of Eum. Dream and oracle together are a major narrative structuring device. One is female and within the house, the other is male and external, but both are agents of ambiguity as much as truth. The oracle, however, provides direct motivation for the action, since its author is a god. Orestes asserts that the god who ordered the act guarantees its fulfilment (269-70).

But what of the oracular description of the fate of those who fail to avenge their kin (273ff.)? Such a lengthy account is puzzlingly redundant. The point, only to be understood later, is in the double bind: Orestes does suffer from these symptoms despite/because of his matricidal action: the situation, we will discover, is not "either/or" but "both/and." The symptoms are therefore proleptic in function and admonitory in unsuspected ways.

The second mention of the oracle (555-9) comes immediately after the interpretation of the dream, in language which, with apparent innocence, juxtaposes trickery and truth: again it is stressed that Apollo is never a deceiver - despite advising deceit.

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4 Other prophecies in Aeschylus are treated where they arise in the "major narrative scene" 76ff.
3 For attempted rationalisations, see Garvie ad loc.
5 See Hester 1979 and p.31 n.40. The establishment of a pair of alternatives which then turn out to be false and to have offered no good outcome either way, is the way oracles very often work. The presentation of a pair of alternatives is a simple way of developing a narrative: see Bal 1985, pp.19-23 and Rimmon-Kenan 1983, pp.22-7 on Bremond's theory of narrative bifurcation. Both Aeschylus and Sophocles make rich use of the technique of false alternatives.
The qualifying phrase τὸ πρίν in relation to Apollo's infallibility cannot fail to point to an ironic gap in that area, despite Garvie's collection of parallel expressions. The third mention comes at the critical moment of the action when Orestes is on the point of killing his mother. Unexpectedly he turns to the *kohon prosopon* of Pylades, asking the question (899):

Πυλάδη, τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἰδεσθώ κτανεῖν;

The question creates an extraordinary moment of suspense. Temporarily, the urgent action halts and the fleeting possibility arises of the narrative taking a completely unexpected turn (Orestes decides not to kill his mother). Aeschylus now resolves this impossible situation with another piece of *ekplexis*, by having Pylades make an answer which involves the oracle, and which is itself "oracular".

That Pylades answers at all is a shock to the audience. At the least, when a figure speaks after long silence, their words must have a particular intensity. Here, when Pylades recalls the binding power of the oracle the effect is almost as if Apollo himself spoke. Pylades' reference to the oracle provides the important final impetus to prosecute the matricide.

Thus each time the oracle is mentioned in the play, two opposing effects are created: on the one hand, the stage figures press the action further towards its conclusion, while on the other, the language used and the precise situation and circumstances develop a level of ambiguity about the validity of the deed itself. These doubts accumulate, and prove, of course, to be well-founded. The simplicity of the act of murder enjoined by the oracle is from the outset engulfed in a greater complexity.

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52Roberts 1984 46, reminds us that Pylades comes from Crisa, and is therefore closely associated with Delphi. See also Knox 1979 41-2 on Aeschylus' brilliant use of a third actor speaking to create "this dramatic explosion ... it is the voice of Apollo himself."

53Marked by Orestes' brutal command at 904 - particularly peremptory without the transitional οὗ δὲ, as Garvie notes.
As well as engaging the audience in a complex hermeneutic process, Aeschylus can use PPDC elements as small, locally significant items for persuasion or confirmation: confirmation may include the moment of *anagnorisis*.

**Persuasion.** The narrative of Io's separation from her family which makes reference to dreams and oracles (PB 640-86) is not central to the overall story of Prometheus, and their effect on Io has been completed by the time we hear about them - she is already a goaded wanderer. They do not arouse the audience's interpretative skills. The most interesting feature of both is the unusual way they are presented as yet more examples of Zeus' strong-arm tactics: at 667-8 the oracle delivers an outright threat to Inachus if he is disobedient and fails to cast his daughter out. The dream and the oracle together constitute threatening messages from Zeus which persuade Inachus to expel his daughter (671-2).

This is not dissimilar to the Homeric heroes' practice of citing a portent as a *peitho* to add weight to a particular argument. In *Iliad* 2 the army must be persuaded to stay on and fight. Odysseus reminds the army of a sacrifice at Aulis in which a snake darted out from below the altar and devoured a mother bird and her eight young and was then turned to stone. Calchas, says Odysseus, interpreted the omen as an indication that the fighting would last for nine years before success came in the tenth (2.301ff.). In the following speech delivered by Nestor on the subject of loyalty, he incidentally recalls a portent - the flash of lightning on the right that appeared as the Greeks embarked for Troy (2.337ff.).

Both of these portents are presented in ways characteristic of their narrators.

Odysseus (see Antenor's description of him, *Iliad* 3. 216-224) is a master of rhetoric and invention. We have no doubt he could "make the audience remember" events they had not in fact witnessed. Nestor, appealing as usual to the authority of past tradition, introduces a good omen merely *en passant* as an extra item. We need not suppose that an external tradition included either of these portents: they exist to persuade.

Unexpanded PPDC elements can also be presented singly or in a group to provide confirmation. Prometheus declares in *prophecy* (rj pf|v, 908) that, without his help, Zeus' rule will fail through a marriage, and if this happens it will be the fulfilment of the *curse* Cronos uttered when Zeus deposed him (910ff.). Confirmation of an ineluctable divine will also seems to be the reason for Eteocles' glancing reference to his *dreams* (Sep. 710f.). There is no reference to Cronos' curse or to Eteocles' dream
elsewhere in the plays in which they occur, nor anywhere else in ancient literature: this adds weight to the view that both owe their existence entirely to the rhetorical needs of the moment.

PPDC elements play a strong part in anagnorisis. Several plays of Aeschylus display a learning curve which arches up towards the fateful moment when the hero or heroine reaches full understanding. Almost invariably a dream etc. is then referred to (which may or may not have been mentioned already), as confirmation that the moment of outcome has arrived. The irony of such expressions of recognition (often making use of κάρτα or ἄγαν) is striking:

Thus at Pers. 518-9 the Queen cries:

ω νυκτὸς δύσις ἐμφανής ἐνυπνίων
ώς κάρτα μοι σαφῶς ἐδήλωσας κακά.

Darius echoes her 739ff:

φεῦ, ταχεία γ’ ἰλθε χρησμῶν πράξεις, ἐς δὲ παιδ’ ἐμὸν
Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηψεν τελευτὴν θεοφάτων· ἐγὼ δὲ ποιον
diὰ μακρὸν χρόνου τάδ’ ἦσθησαν ἐκτελευτήσειν θεοὺς.

Clytemnestra at Cho. 928-9:

οἳ γὰρ, τεκοῦσα ὁνὸς ὅφιν ἐθρεψάμην·
ἡ κάρτα μάντις οὐξ ὀνειράτων φόβος.

Eteocles at Sep. 710-11:

ἄγαν δ’ ἀληθείς ἐνυπνίων φαντασμάτων
ἄγεις, πατρώιων χρημάτων δατήριοι.

Cassandra prefigures such a moment Ag. 1240-1:

καὶ σὺ μὲν τάχει παρὼν
ἄγαν γ’ ἀληθιδόμαντιν οἰκτίρας ἐρείς.54

54Tragedy is in fact studded with significant expressions of recognition concerned with understanding a PPDC element or, more generally, the full meaning of a narrative (or even single word) earlier heard but not fully understood. With the
This appears to be yet another narrative technique developed from Homeric practice: cf. *Od.* 9.507-12 where Polyphemus hears Odysseus' name and recalls παλαίφωτα θέσοντα; *Od.* 10.330-2 where Circe is impressed that Odysseus has not succumbed to her pharmaka and asks him if he is not that Odysseus Hermes prophesied she should expect at some time on his return from Troy; *Od.* 13. 172-8 where Alcinous sees his ship turned to a rock and his town encircled by high mountains: he recalls his father's prophecy that at some time Poseidon would perform both these acts in punishment for the Phaeacian habit of giving safe conduct to mariners.35

If Aeschylus had framed his dramas with a Euripidean-style prologue containing proleptic material, *Supp.* and *PB* would offer us far clearer evidence for subsequent events in the Danaid and Prometheus trilogies than is in fact the case.36

The very varying use Aeschylus makes of PPDC elements and the atmospheric and thematic treatment they receive show that we should be extremely wary of shaping whole scenes or arcs of action from missing plays around items such as Laius' oracle or Oedipus' curse. As we saw with Eteocles' dreams, there is the possibility that PPDC elements are introduced to serve a temporary purpose rather than a larger

confirmation, can come the idea that the hearer has all along been a prophet, as at *Sep.* 808ff. where the chorus say οἱ 'γώ τάξανα, μαύντις εἶμι τῶν κακῶν. Sophocles is undoubtedly calling on the tradition created by Aeschylus in *Cho.* when he creates the exchange between Orestes and Aegisthus *El.* 1479-83. See also Heracles on hearing of Deianeira's potion *Trach.* 1143-5 (δημοῖ, φρονώνλ δή...). See also *Ajax* 353-4, 950-1 and *OC.* 64-5, 299-301. For the same tactic in Herodotus, see e.g. the account of Cambyses' death, 3. 61ff.: Cambyses, on hearing the name Smerdis, recalls a dream in which Smerdis sat on a royal throne with his head reaching the sky; leaping onto his horse to go to Susa to fight Smerdis, Cambyses accidentally gives himself a fatal wound in the thigh: on asking where he is, he is told 'Αγηγήτων: 'καὶ δὴ ὡς τότε ἐπειρήμουσα ἐπέθεν τῷ τόλμῃ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ, ὅποι τῇς συμφορῆς τῆς τε ἐκ τοῦ μάχαν ἐκπελαγμένος καὶ τοῦ τρόμου τοῦ ἐκφράστην, συλλαβὼν δὲ τὸ θεορήσκουν εἶπε: Ἐπεθανοῦντες τὸν Κύρον ἔστε πεπρωμένον τελευτῶν. (Hdt.3.65)

Euripides twice uses dreams in surviving plays. In *Hec.* he imitates his predecessors' use of the mother/son, dream/recognition pattern, and Hecuba's expression when Polydorus' body is discovered owes a good deal to a well-established tradition: δῆμοι, αἷς, ἐμαθὼν ἐνυστομον ὑμαίων ἐμὸν δὴν- οὐ μὲ παραβολαὶ φάμα γελογόντερον, τὸν ἐκεῖνον ἄμφι σὲ...(702-5). By contrast in *IT* the dream-recognition pattern is nicely subverted in various ways, including Iphigenia's dismissive comment on hearing that Orestes is alive after all: ψευδεῖς δὲνειρο, χαρέτε (IT 568-9).

35But note that Homer does not revive Penelope's dream as an element in the ultimate recognition between husband and wife (their marriage bed serves that purpose). His strategy can be very subtle: when Andromache hears of Hector's death there is no explicit reference back to her earlier conversation with Hector on the wall, when they each predicted their fates: she has no need to: the narrative itself subtly recall it in the description of the thrown-off headress which was given to Andromache on her wedding day when she left her father Etion's house, 22. 468-72: the phrase ἐκ δόμου Ἡλιόκεντος, 472, powerfully recalls the earlier passage 6. 407ff. in which Andromache described the slaughter of all her male kin.

36For a reconstruction of the Danaid trilogy see the extended and careful review of the evidence in Garvie, 1969, chapter 5 pp. 163-234; Podlecki *Hics* 22 (1975) 1-19; Friis Johansen and Whittle, 1980, vol. 1 pp. 37ff.; Winnington-Ingram 1983 chapter 3 pp. 55-7. For the Prometheus trilogy, see Griffith 1983 Appendix *The trilogy*, 281ff., and for the Theban trilogy Hutchinson 1985 xvii-xxix. Winnington-Ingram's discussion of possible rules for reconstruction (see also Podlecki) is particularly valuable, as too is his honesty about the inevitable fallibility of any reconstruction. Of the Theban trilogy he writes (19): "It is of course an assumption, founded on a subjective judgement, that Aeschylus in 467 was writing trilogies upon the same principles of art and thought as in 458, but it is the assumption one prefers to make."
structural one. Nor should we infer particular kinds of trilogic patterning elsewhere from the shaping of the Oresteia. This trilogy contains mirror scenes which include narrative mirroring, for example the use of lying narrative by the murderer to his victim in each play; the use of the murderer, rather than an anonymous messenger, to describe and vindicate the killing in each case; but these mirrors in Ag. and Cho. are due to the basic repetitiveness of the murders in this specific trilogy. Similarly, despite Sep 743-9 and 760 we cannot expect that the stress on three in the Oresteia (see particularly the end of Cho. 1065-76) would be repeated in all trilogies.

3.5 Delay and deceit

These two narrative techniques, both highly productive of suspense, seem typical of Aeschylus. Delay might be defined as a prolongation of expected narrative duration.57 Delay experienced by an internal audience gives rise to scenes of anxious waiting, as at the beginning of Ag. and other nostos dramas. Or, lulled into accepting a false prolongation, chorus or characters may be surprised by an unexpected entry like the Danaids at Supp. 825ff. The external audience may or may not be subject to the same treatment. When they know that an event is imminent but something delays or obfuscates it, tension is created, as when Orestes hesitates to kill his mother in Cho. Or they may share the ekplexis of the internal audience at a sooner-than-expected entry.

Narrative deceit is a bigger subject, which deserves some theoretical underpinning.58 Like delay, deceit can affect internal or external narratees, or both (although this last is rare). The audience can be "in" on one character’s deception of another, wondering at every moment if the disguise will be penetrated (can a mother so totally fail to recognise her own son, as Clytemnestra the "Phocian stranger"?). Alternatively the audience too can be misled - to an unquantifiable extent - as the audience of Ag. are by Clytemnestra’s mixture of truth and lies and by the chorus' contradictory, unresolved remarks about her.

Garvie59 and others associate these techniques with the fact that Aeschylus' surviving plots are on the whole simple ones60 which necessarily require deviation

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57 Neither delay nor deceit are defined narrative terms in Prince’s dictionary.
58 See dolos in Section Three.
59 Garvie 1978 couches his discussion in terms of "surprise", and of "variation" or "deviation" from the straight line of the plot.
60 See Garvie’s discussion pp. 64-67; only Sep. might be considered to contain the sort of recognition and reversal prescribed by Aristotle for a complex plot (Po. chs. 10, 11, also 13 and 14.)
from what would otherwise be a straight line from the beginning of the play to its climax at or near the end. As PPDC elements do, such narrative tricks provide shaping and suspense for a form which in Garvie's formulation (quoted on p.33) might well have tended originally to lack such elements,\(^{61}\) or to have come to a premature, over-predictable and consequently insignificant end. This may particularly be the case when a story well-known to the audience is dramatised. It is clear that a nostos play (Pers., Ag., Cho.) requires material to intervene between the news of return and the return itself. The second half of the Odyssey is a pattern book of narrative deceits and delays for just this purpose. To repeat Herrnstein Smith, "our pleasure derives largely from the tension created by local deferments of resolution and evasions of expectation".\(^{62}\)

Once ploys of delay and deceit have started to take effect, it seems that previous familiarity with the outline story of the myth makes surprisingly little difference to the audience's involvement with the action. The fact that we know how the story ends does not make us any less focussed on the course of Oedipus' inquiry, as we watch it unfolding minute by minute in performance. The sheer power of unfolding narrative seems to suppress our awareness of our own ex eventu knowledge to some extent.

Delays and deceits are essential, major features of all narratives, whether fiction or non-fiction, and whether simple or complex in plot terms. They operate at every point on the scale. The examples of Aeschylean practice below are not at all exhaustive. It seems to have been an area in which he was interested to make experiments.

**Narrative delay**

**(a) Supp. entry speeches**

In Supp, we find examples of lengthy entry-speech narratives, after which the person or persons announced do not arrive for a considerable time. At 180 Danaus tells his daughters that he sees dust\(^{63}\) but Pelasgus himself does not arrive and speak until 234. In the interim we are shown Danaus giving his daughters directions, like a stage

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\(^{61}\)See Aristotle's comment (Po. ch. 4 1449a 17) on early tragedy's "short plots and ludicrous diction".

\(^{62}\)See p.29.

\(^{63}\)For dust as harbinger of news see also Ag. 494 and Sep. 82.
manager, for the scene that is to follow. Under his eye they take up their suppliant positions at the altars of the city gods, invoking them in turn. This interim delay generates extra tension and gives the following scene with Pelasgus an excellent and sophisticated frame for the audience: we can watch the Danaids' behaviour in terms of its success as acting, seeing how it conforms to their father's directions (186-203) and the effect it has on Pelasgus, who for his part has certainly not had the opportunity to prepare for the confrontation in advance.

A more complex example occurs later in the play at 710ff. Danaus announces that the Egyptian ships are approaching, news that is unexpected (ἀπροσδοκήτους τούδε καὶ νέους λόγους, 712). He can actually see them (713, 714, 716, 720, 722) and hear them too (718). The heightened sense of their imminent arrival is explored in the kommos between Danaus and his daughters (736-63); there is fairly frequent convention of a (lyric) delay at a critical moment, so this delay is in itself not surprising. However, we certainly expect the entry of the Aegyptii to follow on immediately afterwards.

In a surprising overthrow of expectation, Aeschylus now has Danaus deliver a speech of at least twelve lines, delaying the Aegyptii's entry yet again. He begins οὗτοι ταχεία ναυτικοῦ στρατοῦ στολῆ οὐδέ ὀρμὸς κ.τ.λ. There will be a lengthy mooring procedure to be completed; the fact that night is approaching makes this particularly tricky. His narrative overtly slows the pace, slackening the sense of tension and immediacy created by the earlier announcement. Danaus departs to plead the Danaids' case to the Argives, and the fact that he leaves them alone at this juncture feeds into our supposition that the Aegyptii will not now land until the following morning. The maidens sing a beautiful flight song from which all sense of contextual urgency has been removed; the result, in fact, is similar to the first example in the sense that we are encouraged to appreciate their choral skills in general and enjoy the lyric as a piece of composition. Our surprise at their shrieks when the Aegyptii actually do appear at 825 (sixty-two lines after they were first announced but still much sooner than the Danaids and we have been led to expect) is a theatrical coup. More than twelve lines if Hartung's proposal of a lacuna after 773 is correct.  

Cf. Easterling "the main function of this remark (about the coming of night) is to strengthen the surprising effect of the arrival of the sons of Aegyptus at the end of the next ode." (Nott. Class. Lit. Studies, 1, 1992, p.21)
In each case the delay between announcement and entry creates scenes full of heightened emotional tension and expectation. A linear narrative is treated to excellent poikilia.66

(b) \textit{Septem}: the pairing of Polyneices with Eteocles

Once the symmetrical narrative pattern of the speeches in the scene 375ff. has been established, the rules of dramatic logic come into play and we know that Polyneices will be matched with Eteocles, whether or not we also know this separately through familiarity with the myth. Aeschylus increases tension by the very symmetry and appropriateness of each of Eteocles' choices and by delicate deviations from straight-line development which are richly suggestive (Garvie 1978, 71ff.), while the continuing ignorance of Eteocles, who has shown himself so full of leadership qualities, creates a terrible irony. His reversal from ignorance to knowledge is deliberately delayed; the longer it continues the deeper and more painful the sense of inevitability.

(c) \textit{PB}: deferred story-telling

\textit{PB} has a structure which particularly needs narrative variety since there can be little significant action: after the first scene the main character is immobile and Zeus his antagonist never appears/cannot be shown. Twice in the play an expected narrative is deferred: at 271 Prometheus tells the chorus to dismount and learn everything from start to finish (ὦς μέθητε διὰ τέλους το πάν, 273). The chorus sing their readiness (277-83) but Oceanus unexpectedly appears and the promised revelation is not forthcoming. Then in the Io scene the chorus intervene just at the point where Io has persuaded Prometheus to reveal her future (with their κρυ μήπω γε, 631), and that account is delayed until 703ff.

\textit{Narrative deceit: Ag.}

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66 I would cautiously associate the use of delay here with that in \textit{Pers.} where false expectations about entry seem also deliberately created (but since in \textit{Pers.} the expectations are not to be fulfilled at all rather than merely delayed, they come under the category of deceits rather than delays). First, at 529ff. Atossa tells the chorus to look after Xerxes if he should arrive before her own return - but he does not. Then at 849-51 she tells them that she is going to meet her son with fresh clothes before his return - but we never see Atossa again, and Xerxes returns in rags. See Taplin 92ff. on the technique of false or counter preparation with other examples, and his adoption of Nikitin's solution, which is to transpose 529-31 to after 851 and change καί κατακ in 529 to ὧμετες. However, when I compare \textit{Pers.} with \textit{Supp.}, I would rather suppose a deliberate narrative strategy at work, and would not amend.
The use of narrative deceits, particularly in Ag. and Cho., is pervasive, fundamental and extremely striking. Deceit includes evasion, denial and ambiguity. As many computers have already glowed here, I shall merely pick out the chorus of Ag. for a brief, exemplary description of their deceitful role.

Essentially, Aeschylus gives the chorus a complex double game to play. They have explicit narrative authority (κύριος εἴμι θρόνος, 104). With it they provide the audience with all the background information, framing the play, but at the same time they leave gaps. Aeschylus uses the chorus as an emotional transmitter throughout the play: they feel fear, they long for their king, they suspect Clytemnestra but cannot clarify their suspicions. In the lyric sections they encourage the audience's hermeneutic inquiry by using the language of interpretation themselves - for example with reference to mantike or Helen's name. At the same time, the chorus put the action of the play on the highest possible level: they are searching for understanding on a philosophical and religious level. But the very loftiness of their vision and the very depth of their experience, together with their age, make it difficult for them to see anything unequivocally: they are fallible, and we must align this noble shortsightedness to the brilliant but defective intellect of Oedipus.

The audience, dependent on the chorus for its information, are (as often) able to interpret the information better than the chorus themselves. The narrative deceits which open a gap and invite the audience's own interpretation are highly marked.

*Deceits as narrators:* at a certain point in the parodos Aeschylus makes the chorus, like the guard before them, refuse to narrate (the guard refuses Ag. 36-9, the chorus 248); the word εὐθεῖα, "subsequently", in the line τὰ δ᾽ ἐνθεον ὁδὸς εἴδον ὁλῶσεν ἐννέα, actually encourages us to puzzle out the consequences at the very moment that the chorus abandons its account). The chorus presents much predictive material such as the portent, Calchas' prophecy and, in the so-called hymn to Zeus, a notion that Zeus permits human understanding when it derives from suffering. They stress the authority of such elements (249), and seem to have the information necessary to map out the future; however, they are only human, and cannot do so. PPDC material is intersected with the hymn-like refrain of άλλανον άλλανον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ ἐν νικάτω (121, 139, 159), the effect of which is to maintain a binary opposition between hope and fear, leaving no space for analysis of the future. We also see

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67See Goldhill 1984, for a recent full discussion.
68The maintenance of an open view about the future, despite evidence which strongly suggests a negative outcome, is a delaying narrative technique which may be seen in Per. as well. In psychological terms it is a thoroughly plausible human characteristic, as exemplified by those who "refuse" to believe bad news, such as imminent war, until hostilities begin.
refusal to use knowledge to look ahead in the fatalistic che sera, sera expression of 251-54, which attempts no interpretation. Their following wish (255-7), "May it all turn out as this nearest bulwark, sole guardian of the land of Apia wishes", whether by "sole guardian" they mean (by inadvertent dysphemia) Clytemnestra, or merely themselves, is woefully inadequate to the situation. Thus as narrators, despite their breadth of knowledge, the chorus are characterised by (a) refusal and (b) unwarranted openness about the future. This second feature, the maintenance of a binary attitude, reflects Bremond's model of narrative progression in which each potential action gives rise to two possibilities - fulfilment, or lack of fulfilment. Here their fear for the future motivates them to keep both alternatives open.

Deceits as narratees: the chorus show the same characteristics. During the episodes they are unable to interpret the information they are given. This is demonstrated most clearly in the Cassandra scene where they fluctuate between (a) expressions of incomprehension as far as prophecy is concerned: αἰδρίς εἶμι τῶν μαντευμάτων, 1105; οὕτω ξυνηκά, νόν γὰρ ἐξ αἵνευμάτων ἐπαργύρωσι θεσφάτοις ἀμηθανό, 1112-3; (b) ready acceptance of past events: ἐκεῖνα δὲ ἔγνων. πάσα γὰρ πόλις βοή, 1106, see also 1162-3 and 1242-5, and (c) gloomy verdicts on the efficacy of prophecy in general (see 1132-5). The stichomythia of 1246-7 is a miracle of compressed non-communication, marked by the final comment of the chorus, δυσμαθή, 1255.

69 So too is the stichomythia in the Herald scene, 538-550
CHAPTER FOUR: SPECIFIC NARRATIVE SEQUENCES

This chapter analyses in more detail some major sequences of message narrative in Aeschylus. It begins with the great messenger scene Pers. 249-622, and then considers three programmatic narrative scenes in Sep., Ag. and PB. It concludes, by contrast, with a discussion of the two small messenger scenes of Sep. and Supp.

4.1 Aeschylus' great messenger scene: Persae 249-622

"Persae gives us the messenger speech in its purest and at the same time its most ambitious form." (Rosenmeyer 1982 198)

In its use of an anonymous messenger to relate vital and fairly recent events in lengthy set-piece fashion, resolving an either/or dilemma with significant outcome, this is the Aeschylean message scene which, superficially, most closely aligns with those of Sophocles and Euripides. Many formal elements found here later became standard features of all major message narrative. In the absence of other precedents, this scene inevitably serves as the archetype of all subsequent set-piece messenger scenes.

There are major differences, however, which can only be understood by appreciating the shaping of the play overall, and the messenger's scene within it. Aeschylus is not interested in the distinctive dramatic structure in which the messenger's factual narrative provides the culminating "answer" to a hermeneutic problem raised by an oracle or other PPDC element. His arrival and his information do not create the scene of pivotal importance in the play. contra Rosenmeyer, it is striking that (1) the central figure of Xerxes has not yet appeared onstage, (2) Xerxes is not the central participant in the agon described by the messenger, (3) two of the messenger's four

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1There is not here, however, the temporal immediacy of, e.g. the messages in S. OT, Ant. or OC. The closest temporal (and spatial) comparison is Ag., when Clytemnestra narrates the fall of Troy, events occurring across the Aegean the previous day (278-9). In the subsequent development of that play as this, the time taken for the forces and their leader to return home is elastic.

2See 30ff.

3In this respect the scene conforms to the pattern of "advance messenger speeches" - those which lead up to the arrival of a central character, eg. A. Ag., S. Ai., E. El., IT. (See Taplin 1977 83).
speeches are not narratives but lists, (4) all the events narrated, especially those round the River Strymon, tend to have a symbolic, rather than a fact-providing function.

The most obvious element of difference, however, is the early positioning of the scene. How could Aeschylus, master of suspense, be content to let expectation and outcome drop away at this premature mid-point without offering any further plot interest?

Too often, because of its early date, the play has been condemned as dramatically undeveloped on these grounds and its profound aesthetic qualities misunderstood. It seems insufficiently acknowledged that dramatising a famous event in very recent history, as opposed to an event in myth, is likely to impose on the work very different constraints and result in a different hermeneutic. It is of course impossible to gauge the effect of the eight year-old events on the thinking behind Aeschylus' composition, but these circumstances surely prevented a dramatic shaping which would keep the audience "on the edge of their seats" until a dénouement at or near the end. A different approach is inevitable.

The play divides both formally and dynamically into four sections, three which are mostly narrative, and a closing lament. The Messenger's account is set between the Queen's narration of her dream and portent on the one hand, and Darius' narration of oracle and prophecy on the other. The "immediate" message narrative is thus very deliberately boxed in between two major PPDC narratives.

If the play is deprived of a central peak, it still contains many typical Aeschylean techniques to arouse suspense - initial ignorance, PPDC elements, surprise, delay and deceit: in the first half of the play (West's "charging" as opposed to "discharging" half), Aeschylus' opening technique of obliterating known facts is used to the full. He begins by creating a world into which the news of Salamis has not broken. The allusive language of 8-16 encapsulates a conjunction of foreboding, prophecy, message and return:

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4In Suppe, the early message narrative (605-624) completes one goal, gaining asylum, but within the same scene the action moves on to the Egyptian attack. A similar fresh movement is found after Euripides' messenger speeches which take an early position. After Hec. 518-82 the new goal of punishing Polymestor is initiated; after Hel. 605-21 the escape plot is hatched. Bacch. 677-774 is an interesting example of a messenger speech which is basically thematic and preparatory, presenting no significant outcome.

5Else, 1967, 87, names them apprehension, verification, explanation and emotional realisation. For a slightly different quadripartite approach see also Smethurst 81ff. Most recently West 1990, pp.4-7 discusses all Aeschylean tragedies from a dynamic point of view in terms of a similar fourfold structure of anxiety, clarification, ("charging" sections), dénouement and adjustment ("discharging" sections).

6See previous note.
The dream thickens the atmosphere of foreboding, which is sustained by the chorus' neutral interpretation. Most other surviving nostos tragedies move past return to deal with revenge, and dreams thus presage violent death. The dream in Pers. however, apart from 197-99, symbolically anticipates the almost immediately forthcoming messenger's news. Dream and news, anticipation and fulfilment, are sited in unusually close proximity. Both narratives are contained within one scene and constitute the only uses of iambic trimeter in it.

In the "discharging" half other techniques appear. First, different types of "surprise" are developed, notably when Darius is unexpectedly raised from the dead for a major scene, a great theatrical coup. The false or counter-preparation of 529-31, which reinforces the natural expectation that Xerxes will appear, contributes effectively to the surprise. (I would not move the lines, with Nikitin (and Taplin) to follow 851.) There is more deliberate surprise later: as Dawe notes, 849-51 makes us expect Atossa again, or Atossa without Xerxes, not Xerxes without Atossa. Both these seem typical examples of Aeschylus' bold narrative technique to create bouleversement, absolutely in line with other plays, although there seems to be a contrast at work between the tragic irony of the first half of this play and the different treatment of τὰ ἐξ ἀέλπτων in the second.

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7 Here as in Ag. the chorus play a double role, one for their lyric passages and one in the episodes. In the lyric sections their keen religious sense intuits disaster (eg. 94-100), but when called upon to interpret the dream they equivocate (215-9).

8 As they do in pre-tragic nostos stories, i.e. Od. 19. 536ff., Stesichorus' Oresteia fragment. For tragic examples see A. Cho and S.Ei. It is the case also for Trach. if oracle is substituted for dream.

9 The Queen's dream narrative is framed by trochaic tetrameters while the Messenger is involved in an epirrhematic dialogue with the chorus on entry; the scene ends with choral song.

10 For this term see Garvie 1978,67-71, Taplin ibid. 94-6.

11 Dawe 1963, 27.
The unexpected, extensive Darius scene develops major perspectives in the play. Darius' ignorance of Salamis enables the poet to create a linking diptych across the two halves in which we see the news breaking onto the father as well as the mother. But Darius is also an almost omniscient narrator and so the scene develops a vital understanding about the meaning of Salamis in the context of history and the divine plan.

The messenger's news, because so well known, could not constitute the most important information, nor be a sufficiently satisfactory telos for the external audience. The play is better understood as a meditation on the meaning of the battle - a difficult accomplishment for an ancient playwright dealing with recent events, since there are none of the ready-made perspectives available to a story derived from myth. The Darius scene exactly remedies this lack, opening windows onto past and future. As a result, the ultimate presence of Xerxes for the final lament produces a very particular and powerful, distanced kind of religious and emotional contemplation.

Persae has a quadripartite simplicity in formal terms. However, as an aesthetic narrative it is complex, with rich and subtly-developing internal correspondences in terms of metrical shaping, theme and vocabulary. The tightly-packed opening motifs of the parados (cf. 8-15 previously quoted) unfurl as the play develops to display a huge and beautiful final form. This "unfurling" of motifs creates a structure of its own for the play. The Messenger's rheseis are a vital part of this unfurling process.

As well as forming an inextricable part of the web of language and thought of the play, his rheseis also constitute one of a series of performances, which go on to include the rituals of libation and ghost-raising, and the final lament. The greatest element of performance in terms of song and dance is reserved until the end. The gradual intensification of understanding and emotion towards the final scene show how exquisite in form a simple plot can be.

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1Dawe crisply comments, "Dareios' omniscience has certain lacunae very convenient for the poet's exposition", ibid. 31.
2As a control, one could consider the rich background that was available to Aeschylus when he began to plan the Oresteia.
3For this view of the dynamic of the play, see Garvie op.cit. 67, and especially Smethurst 81ff.
Entry and orientation 249-95

The features outlined here are the first appearance of what was to become standard in subsequent message narratives:

a. Headlines 251-2 (see Ag. 503,518) and 255
b. Emotional start: 249-50, use of ὧ with vocatives and large scale address, ὀμοί, 253.
c. Eyewitness reference, 266-7: the messenger affirms that this is a first-hand account.
d. καὐτός ὃ ἀξέλπτως νόστιμον βλέπω φῶς, 261: apart from echo of the Homeric phrase νόστιμον ἤμωρ, the idea of return beyond expectation is repeated again Ag. 505-7. Delight in being alive to tell the tale is comically expressed by the Guard Ant. 392-5 and 437-440.

Narrator and narratees

Features of this relationship too can be paralleled in subsequent plays. The Messenger addresses himself first to the chorus (Πέρσαι, 255 and 267). They immediately burst into a lyric lament, to which the Messenger responds without abandoning his iambic trimeters.

The initial silence of the Queen is repeated in Ag, where there is doubt whether Clytemnestra remains onstage. In both plays when the queens do speak they begin with excellent reasons for silence: Atossa is initially overwhelmed by the news (290). I find (with Broadhead) Atossa's silence effective and in no way evidence of inability to handle more than one actor on the part of the playwright. The Queen does not join in the final lament, nor in this interim one; Aeschylus has decided against using her in this way. In a novel, we are not surprised if events are described first through the focalisation of one character and then through another. In a room of several people in real life, some may remain listening in silence. Even in highly stylised Attic drama the playwright surely makes a deliberate choice as to when and how his narratees enter the dialogue. Silence is a powerful device in itself.

It is not particularly surprising that the Messenger should initially address the chorus, whether or not a queen is also onstage. Evidence from other plays suggests, quite

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16Clytemnestra's lack of involvement with the messenger might be accounted for by the fact that she knows his news already (Ag. 587-599).

16Silence is superbly handled elsewhere by Aeschylus, eg. in his use of Cassandra Ag. 1035-71 and Pylades Cho. 900-2. On the subject of Aeschylean silence see Taplin 1972, 57-97 and Taplin 1977, 507.
reasonably, that important gerontes are equally appropriate recipients of state news as a queen. The Messenger of Ant. begins his narrative to the chorus alone, until interrupted by Eurydice. In OT and QC the chorus are the sole narratees. Both Clytemnestra in Ag. and Orestes in Cho. address the chorus alone as they display their victims' bodies.

Furthermore, choral lament is an appropriate initial response to bad news. In this play, the chorus have already uttered many forebodings in anapaest and lyric and it is reasonable on these grounds too that they should be the first narratees and introduce the initial notes of lament into the play; they will also close off the Messenger's narrative 515-6 before their song 532ff..

The Queen, however, is the major narratee. She and the Messenger overtly flag the reciprocal nature of their narrator/narratee roles; the phatic element here is very pronounced. The infinitives in 292 το μητῆς λέξει, μητῆς έρωτήσασα πάθη suggest a clear reference to the two roles (with Broadhead, it is easy to supply τίνα to be the subject of both infinitives). At 254 the Messenger says with reference to himself ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξει πάθος, and at 294-6 the Queen uses the same language to say:

όμως δ᾿ ἀνάγκη πημονᾶς βροτοῖς φέρειν θεών διδόντων. πᾶν ἀναπτύξεις πάθος λέξον καταστάς.

Herington suggests that the participle καταστάς (296) may mean "take up your stance", in which case there would be an indication that the Messenger delivered his narrative in a particularly striking way, approaching that of a rhapsode. If this is the case, the participle aligns itself with the phatic contents of the Queen's speech, creating yet another reference to the Messenger's coming performance.

The distinctively different character of the Messenger's four rheseis is made to depend on the series of factual questions Atossa asks. Perhaps in no other extant tragedy does the narratee direct the content of the Messenger's speeches in quite so striking a way - though in fact the Messenger gives more than straight literal answers to the Queen's questions, and occasionally takes the initiative.

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17 With early images of corpses at 272-3; 274-7 will be developed later in the narrative. The significant πλήθος compound of 272 will also be picked up. See below note 24.

18 Herington 261 n.72
The Queen's emotional reactions quicken ours; her interest in her son colours her questioning, and she is the most committed interrogator, closely involved in the "learning curve" of the scene. She experienced the dream, and now understands its implications (ἐστὶν ἐν 472). There is a moving, queenly dignity in the way she handles the Messenger, counterpointed by her motherly concern for her child's clothes. She sustains the familial thread of the action. Her understanding of the dream motivates the sacrifice that will raise Darius.

Structure of the four rheseis

The first speech is a name catalogue of dead Persian archelaoi and the fourth begins as geographical catalogue. Catalogues thus form the framing ring around the second and third speeches, which are the only true message narratives of the whole. The two speeches do not much resemble later message narratives. For Aeschylus, thematic development is as much at issue as factual information. There is little of the sharp circumstantial detail we would find in Sophoclean or Euripidean narratives, which work our imaginations by denoting a supposed real situation. The kind of imagistic description we find here works the opposite way, connecting up individual items or events to conform with a greater pattern. It is striking that in these speeches too the Messenger makes no use of first-person pronouns, and approaches an Homeric third-person omniscience. What can the Messenger, a simple combatant, know of daimon or phthonos? Yet his use of such terms is presented as thoroughly authoritative.

By contrast, Sophocles and Euripides tend to put real-life limitations on their messengers' authority: their broader comments are understood as speculations only, expressive of their reactions. Then too, their eye-witnessing is realistically limited to one spatial position. Restrictions of view can be exploited to good dramatic effect, but are not part of Aeschylus' aims here: he wants his messenger to convey a panoptic view.

The two narratives are markedly shaped to serve the thematic purposes of the play overall. There is an exclusion of distinct detail. No Greek or Persian is named and

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19 See Taplin 124 for a good discussion of the visual action: Xerxes' rags (first mentioned in the dream, 199) become a theme which reinforces the sense of fall: see p.49 n.48.
20 For example in Trach. in Hyllus' narrative, his view of the scene is expressly that of one of the crowd at Heracles' sacrifice until he is spotted by his father and made to come forward (794ff.) The Nurse describes Deianeira moving into her private chamber; she is only able to continue to be an eyewitness by explicitly λοθραζόν ἐξεσκευαμένη (914).
the event is depicted primarily as the result of a daimon's activity. The brief third speech is hardly a distinct narrative, more a repeat of the great second one in an intensified, cameo version: on another, smaller island, the best of the Persian nobles (unnamed) meet their deaths while Xerxes looks on.

However it is in the sphragis, the narrative of Strymon which concludes the four speeches, that Aeschylus' hand is revealed most openly. This account, an ahistorical invention on the poet's part, exists solely to reinforce the symbolic/thematic value system of the play.\

First section 296-332 including first rhesis, the catalogue of Persian deaths 302-330.

The Messenger makes a symmetrical answer to the Queen's pointedly phrased double question at 296-8 (Who did not die? Whom shall we lament?): the first question produces the necessary information that Xerxes is still alive, introducing the young king's name into the scene without giving any further details.

It is a striking narrative ploy to detach Xerxes so firmly from the fate of his nobles at the very outset. His separate fate is emphasised again at 465ff. Separating out the king reflects the existence of the double theme of family and country operating in the play, prepares the ground for Xerxes' solo entry in the final scene and provides some realistic motivation for the conventional ubi sunt questions of the lament. The narrative of Psyttaleia will emphasise that Xerxes has lost not only a huge army but also his dearest comrades. Isolation also helps assimilate the Persian king, who Herodotus shows was typically surrounded by many henchmen of various kinds, into the type of solitary suffering hero. It is part of the process of the play in its work of adapting history to a tragic pattern.

The first rhesis is a decorated list of fourteen dead Persian nobles, which to some extent imitates the necrologies of e.g. Iliad 5. 43-83, except that the focus is largely fixed on their state after death - as lifeless corpses floating in the sea off Psyttaleia (303) or Salamis itself (307, 309).

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21 Whereas events on Psyttaleia have a historical basis: see Hdt. 8. 76 and 95.
22 The sight/light/day vs. night vocabulary of 299-301 will be picked up in the central narrative 353-432.
23 See Garvie op.cit. pp.67-70.
24 See Broadhead Appendix 5 pp. 318-21 and CR 1946, pp.4-5.
25 Psyttaleia is presumably to be inferred from the adjective Στιλπνώδ, 303).
This is the middle of three linked lists of Persian nobles spaced out strategically through the play; at the beginning (21-58), here, and at the end (955-1001). The first list might be compared to the Catalogue of Ships in Iliad 2 in terms of its early positioning and epic colour. It describes individual fighters setting out. The second list shows the outcome.

It is interesting that of the fourteen names in the Messenger's narrative only two from the seventeen given in the first list are mentioned again here, and that in the ous sont-ils formula of the final lament, nineteen of the twenty-seven warriors listed are also totally new names. The seemingly limitless supply of names creates the effect of colossal losses.

The first rhesis omits any account of the battle. Paratactic catalogues cannot deliver hypotactic narrative. Aeschylus has reserved the Messenger's narrative powers so far. The unburied corpses are the aftermath of battle, and offer a tragic reflection on events yet to be described at all. The list beautifully controls our reception of the ensuing battle description.

*Second section 333-477, including central narrative 353-432 and third narrative 447-71*

333-354 exemplify the typical way Atossa's requests for specific items of factual information are used as a springboard for broader thematic development. 333, with its strong ἄταρ, and the resumptive ἄναπτερέας πάλιν moves us away from reflection, and the Queen asks a question about strategy which introduces one of the key thematic words of this play, παρθένος. The vast number of Persian forces has in itself becomes a reason for their collapse (413-6). Questioning why superior παρθένος should not have prevailed quickly introduces the next important idea: a δαίμων was responsible.

The Queen's next question (350-352) is also a limited and circumstantial one. Which side began the attack? ἄρχη συμβολής, τίνες κατήρξαν; But finding a more profound sense of ἄρχη (origin, source, that which is opposed to τέλος), the

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26 As Broadhead notes, the names certainly do not show an historical accuracy, suggesting a different function.
27 ἄταρ marks "a break-off, a sudden change of topic", Denniston 1954, 52.
28 παρθένος occurs Pers. 40, 166, 334, 337, 342, 413, 429, 432, 477, 803. Note also the verbs πληθω (272, 420) and πληθώ (421). For an extended discussion see Michelini 1982, 86ff.
Messenger launches into his unbroken *rhexis* 353-432, the huge central account of Salamis.

*The problem of anonymity*

Recent work by Goldhill has focussed attention on a civic ideology which would press for a narrative of democratic anonymity on the Greek side.\(^{29}\) Athenian ideology is undoubtedly a particularly important factor\(^{30}\) in this play. However, it does not explain why the anonymity in this speech extends to Persians as well as Greeks.

The narrative's lack of precise detail is not restricted to names but is a general feature. Of the 80-line speech, only 20 lines (409-28) can be said to describe the engagement of the ships - and then only in the vaguest terms. The *ἀρχή* of the battle in the sense the Queen meant it is given at 409, but no distinct sequence of action builds up to create momentary suspense about the outcome.\(^{31}\) There is no flavour of the military despatch. We are given not a single Greek exploit and hardly a word of command. The traditional, Homeric possibilities of creating a colourful battle scene\(^{32}\) - with a succession of named individuals described in their exploits and their deaths - is ruled out.

Detailed, eyewitness accounts of Salamis, including feats by named individuals, must have been extremely familiar to many members of the audience. With typically bold and brilliant narrative manipulation, Aeschylus holds in abeyance the authorial audience's abundant if one-sided knowledge, and recreates Salamis afresh, not as a patriotic Greek chronicle, but as a Persian tragedy. In his scenario, the Athenians feature as the agents of retribution but the Persians are the focus of attention: to make this shift of emphasis work, anonymity and the avoidance of a friends/enemies opposition are strategically important.

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\(^{30}\)See the stichomythia about Athens 231-46, positioned immediately before the Messenger's entry. Goldhill's excellent analysis (1988, 189-93) shows how Aeschylus in this section develops the opposition between a state-funded hoplite citizen army and navy with "collective values essentially linked to the practice and principles of the democratic *polis*", and a tyranny in which the ruler is not answerable to the people. Each element of this exchange is repeated and developed in the Messenger's words.

\(^{31}\)As, e.g. in Orestes' horse race S. El. 698-748. See Ch.7

\(^{32}\)There was no comparable tradition for *sea* battles, however.
Chapter 4

To begin with the second point, there is an obvious difficulty with the arousal of too much Athenian fervour, which would prevent sympathetic identification with the stage figures and make the final lament an expression of Schadenfreude. Given the circumstances of performance, Aeschylus could not fail to uphold a keenly Athenian sense of victorious achievement, achieving this by presenting a democratic army behaving as one (ὑπὲρ πάντων, 405): this is contrasted with the tyrant who will behead unsuccessful soldiers (371). The increase in pace developed between 386 and 402 indicates an apex for the speech before the description of the engagement itself, culminating in the single passage of direct speech, the πολλη βοή of 402-5. This war-song must have powerfully affected the audience.

All the same, these patriotic effects are restricted to the middle section of the speech. Overall, a militaristic Greek/Persian opposition is avoided. A daimon initiated Persian ruin, and in the ensuing battle it is their own confined position, rather than Greek aggression, which seems to cause defeat. The important focalisation at 465 is on Xerxes, not the victorious Themistocles. Of the Messenger's four speeches, the outer two contain no mention of Greeks at all.

Throughout the play the Persians are presented as co-inhabitants of the same moral universe as the Greeks: their different cultural and religious practices are largely elided (though see 371). The line of Persian kings, and particularly Darius, Atossa and Xerxes, become members of a suffering royal house whose continuity and prosperity are dashed in similar terms to those of other houses in Greek myth. Of great significance too in this are the three strategically-placed Persian catalogues. They build into the play an overall theme of terrible loss: a modern production with skenographia might convey this with a huge painted backdrop of floating corpses, like Géricault's painting The Raft of the Medusa. Individual named Persians, presented not historically but symbolically and aesthetically in their separate deaths, are deliberately restricted to the highly resonant lists. The Persians could be Trojans, or any other defeated mythical community.

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22. Other messenger speeches survive in which the audience's sympathies do not lie with either the narrator or the narratee: cf. Euripides' two escape plays, IT and Hel. In the latter play, for example, the Messenger relates Menelaus' and Helen's escape to Theoclymenus. From the audience's point of view all the onstage figures - Egyptians - are basically enemies whom (apart from Theoclymenus) we simply wish to see outwitted.

23. War-song rather than battle cry: see Broadhead ad loc.

24. The brave deeds of Syennesis (326-8) are removed from the battle narrative.
Ideology

Within this scene, the technique of blanking out the names of all historical individuals, including Xerxes and Themistocles (though the former is of course named before and after) throws divine agency into prominence and puts the action on a higher level. The polarity of Persian/Greek is subsumed under other polarities: deceit/ truth, night/ day, order/ disorder.

The Messenger makes it clear that the gods engineered Xerxes' downfall, merely making use of a Greek's trick to bring it about. The language of 353-4 and 361-2 recalls the foreboding mesode of the parodos (93-100).

Night and day create a time frame. To Greeks the new day began at sunset, and so we are shown one day's development from dark to light. The Messenger's focalisation is interesting here: while it is dark we have no description of the Greek side. We do not "see" them, and all we "know" is what the Persians know, that they are supposed to be planning a disorderly flight under cover of darkness (ἀλλος ἀλλος δραμωθε κρυφασι, 359-60).

Daybreak produces reversal: the Greeks, in the light, reveal the favour of the gods. They are now confident (372, 374, cf. 392, 394) and orderly (359-60, 366-8, 374, 380-3, cf. 399-400, 422-3). A powerful sense of anticipation is conveyed through the conjunction of effects of sound and sight, and through a build-up of tempo. Epic epithets λευκόπατος (386) and εὐφεργής introduce the day (387). Military sounds follow at 388, 389, 390 - the rock of Salamis itself resounds to the noise- and at 393, culminating in the synaesthesia of σάλπιξ ... ἐπέφλεγεν (395).

The sound of the trumpet is the signal to attack. Immediately (εὐθὺς δὲ, 396) we hear the ποιδία of the oars, and this is followed by our first sight of the Greeks: ἄχαι ὁδεγ εἰς ἑκατονταὶ ἰδεῖν, 398 (like day, εὐφεργής ἰδεῖν, 387): After the brief moment of panorama in which the entire force is manifest (391-401), sound takes over again - the direct speech of battle song which is the apex of this series of

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37especially the opening question δολούμενεν δ' ἀπάταν τοιοῦ ἔννορ θεόν ἐννοίων ἀλάτενα;
sounds. To the clear words of the Greeks the Persians can only respond with an incoherent γλῶσσης ῥόθος (406).

The battle inverts the situation of the previous night: then the Persians encircled with ships in good order, now the Greeks do the same (κύκλων ... πέριξ 368, repeated 418) as the Persian fleet and men are battered and disintegrate. The battle narrative ends with sound and sight again: final sounds are Persian voices raised in lament (οἴμοιγη δ´ ὀμοῦ/ κοκύμασιν, 426-7) until - final sight - "the night's dark eye removed (everything)": the account stops when no more can be seen. The remaining lines of the speech close the rings, stressing one day and repeating πλῆθ- language.

The Queen's response 433-4 attempts to encapsulate the losses just described, but the Messenger now surprisingly gainsays her. Aeschylus alters the focus. With the language of "sum" and "number" still in play, he caps her remark by telling her there is more suffering "twice as heavy" to be described.

441-4 give us the headlines for the third rhexis, which is strikingly not a list of individuals and their fates, although we might expect one after the introductory lines 441-4 and the Queen's subsequent question. Instead, this third rhexis forms a parallel to the second, with a change in focus from quantity of disaster to quality. Every element of the second speech is repeated in the third, but smaller and intensified: just as Salamis is the island of Ajax (368), Psyttaleia is the place where Pan treads. Xerxes, deceived, has made a sensible disposition of troops there that, as before, will turn out to be fatally in error. He does not understand what is to come (το μέλλον 373 and 454); the god plans something different (373 and 454-5); the action takes place over one day (αὔθημερον, 455); instead of encircling their enemies the Persian nobles are themselves encircled (418 and 457-8), they die with no room to manoeuvre (413-6 and 458-9). Not many men, but the flower of them all died: finally the Messenger brings us to just one: Xerxes himself (465-70).

The historical Xerxes took no part in the engagement: Aeschylus has truthfully handled this possibly awkward fact without compromising the importance of Xerxes to his play. He did this by making her son's survival the subject of the Queen's opening question, to which the Messenger resonantly replied, Ἑρξης μὲν αὐτῶς ζη.

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39 The Queen's κοι of 438 seems to express surprise: see Denniston p. 310 and Broadhead ad loc.

40 The use of "scales" language here at 437 and also at 440 is Homeric in origin, (cf. Iliad 22.211; 8.69). Although no god is mentioned, a deity (Zeus in the Iliad examples) is implied, and so the theme of divine disapproval is indirectly reintroduced just before the next description (repeating the frame set up at 353-4 to some extent).

41 See Hdt. 8.90. He watched from Mount Aegaleos, across the strait from Salamis.
In the major narrative we saw him innocently deceived and heard the words of his orders (355-371). Now at 465 he unexpectedly appears as the eyewitness of these events from his vantage point on the hill top, replacing the Messenger’s focalisation. A new, more distant perspective is introduced to round off the narrative. His physical remoteness from the fighting momentarily suggests a remote and uninvolved viewpoint, like that of an Olympian in the Iliad, or even that of the audience themselves. But his grieving actions firmly recall the dream now turned to reality (repeated phrasing of 199 and 468). He rises, giving the order to retreat and breaking off the view of the battle that he has and, because he is the focaliser, the one that we have.

The Queen’s response 472-7 closes the inner ring, finding perspective in the action of the δεξίων and making a comparison with Marathon. Her next question moves on to the aftermath. The interrogative οἴσθα σημηναὶ τρόπως; (479) revives our sense of the Messenger’s function and his role in delivering narrative.

The Messenger disposes of the Queen’s question in two lines and then delivers his fourth rhesis on the fate of the army; as before, he gives a far more extensive answer than the question demanded.

*Third section: fourth rhesis 480-514*

The speech begins with a list of twelve place or river names from Boeotia to the Edonian land (482-95). The geographical catalogue associates richly with the previous catalogues, suggesting a huge natural world turned against a suffering mighty host. At first no narrative is developed, although there is a temporary change of focalisation with first person markers at 485, 488, 493: this is the common man’s account.43

The brief narrative of events at the Strymon 495-507, (which occurs in the dead centre of the play) is an extraordinary condensation of themes and images spread throughout.44 Herodotus gives stories of Persian hunger and especially thirst on the

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42 The Queen’s relieved response makes use of light/dark polarities, playing on φῶς.
43 Cf. The Herald’s description of the privations of common soldiers Αγ. 555-566.
44 Several parallels with Αγ. as a nóstos drama continue here: cf. with the Herald’s final speech Αγ. 636-80. Both are “nóstos-in-disarray” speeches describing an army scattered on its return home, although still under its leader. In both, divine disfavour is manifest. The elements turn against both (see Αγ. 650-2 for the oath which fire and water took). In both the storm occurs at night and it is day which reveals the true state of affairs (Αγ. 659-60).
retreat, but he does not refer to this incident at the Strymon and it appears to have no historical basis whatsoever, nor indeed to be a geographical possibility. If this redundant narrative was invented more or less *ex nihilo*, then this in itself is a reason for believing that we are brought very close to themes Aeschylus wanted to emphasise. It is fascinating that he should have chosen *thesis* over lyric to do this.

The Strymon narrative reinforces the same motifs as the second and third *rheseis*: a god destroys the Persians (note *theos* and compounds repeated throughout at 495, 497, 500, 502 and, as resonant final word of the speech, 514), lulling them into a false sense of security when at night (495) an unseasonable storm arises to freeze the river. Parallels with δείμμαν and δόλος are clear. Deluded Persian thinking is given stronger and more ironical emphasis than ever before (497-501). In the daylight the ice melts and the soldiers drown (note the strong epiphanic phrase φλέγων γὰρ ἁγωνείς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος (504; 504-5 may be compared to 386-7).

The Strymon narrative does even more than offer yet another narrative to parallel the themes of Salamis, however. It associates metonymically with other important narratives in the play as well, completing what is in effect a complex Venn diagram in which *all* the narratives of the play reveal linked characteristics and a linked, even identical causality.

The crossing of the temporarily frozen river is an imagistic reworking of Xerxes' act of sending an army across the Hellespont. This symbolically loaded event, of utmost significance for the whole play, is as a historical fact largely excluded from it: Aeschylus uses it thematically instead. The chorus allusively refer to it early on, 65ff., and this constitutes the first in a series of metonymically linked narratives - dream - Salamis - Psyttaleia - Strymon. The "yoke" vocabulary, used to describe the joining of lands across the sea (71-2, 130), readily gives rise to the dream, in which an actual yoke becomes such an important symbol. After the description of the deaths by water at Salamis, the Strymon episode, by reverting to the imagistic idea of

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45See Hdt 8.7.24 and 2.14. He expresses the view given also to Darius at 792 and 794 that the earth itself was on the side of the Greeks.
46See Broadhead *ad loc*.
47At Ag, 658 the λαμπρὸν ἡλίου φῶς rises to show the "Aegean sea flowering with corpses" after the storm in the night. At Ant, 416 Sophocles uses the identical phrase λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος when the sun also appears to have a supernatural effect in relation to the burial of Polyneices.
48A strategy of creating a series of disparate, problematic narratives of which the final one offers a synthesis must be a feature of many complex narratives. It is used much more boldly as the overt structure of eg. Proust's *A La Recherche du temps perdu* and Doris Lessing's *The Golden notebook*. See also 150 for Sophocles' accumulation of similar narratives in *Phil*.
49Yoke imagery also works in other ways too not dealt with here - for example in terms of Greek slavery (eg. 50, 745) and to Persian widowhood (139, 542).
the yoke as it was first used to join dry land across water, points to the meaning of the entire sequence.

Fetter/chain/net vocabulary (introduced 70) described the literal construction of the bridge of boats over the Hellespont, but at 99ff., Fate set a net for humans they cannot leap over to escape, so that already the phrase πίσωνες ἀποτονός πείσματι λαούροις τε μηχανοῖς (114) has a sinister reference. In the description of Salamis and Psyttaleia "mesh" and "trick" vocabulary is kept in play (cf. δόλος, 361, το ὄμηχανείν, 458; the vivid image of the netted tunnyfish, 424ff.). Now, in the Strymon story, the meaning of the whole sequence of narratives is laid open. The Strymon story operates as a kind of parodic fabula docet of them all, showing how human hybris\textsuperscript{50} finds an absolutely fitting divine punishment.\textsuperscript{51}

The Strymon narrative forms a ring with the dream to close the huge scene which began with the Queen's entry at 159. After the chorus' reaction 515-6 it is the dream the Queen's thoughts turn to (518-20): the Messenger's final narrative has resonantly fulfilled the νομικὸς δῆμος ἐμφανῆς.

4.2 Major and programmatic narrative scenes: framing, structure, verbal functions and use of time. Septem's Shield scene; Agamemnon's Cassandra scene and Prometheus Bound's Io scene.

In these three magnificent and diverse narrative scenes we find some striking underlying similarities.\textsuperscript{52} Each scene is given an overt, distinct shaping so that the enormous amount of information communicated is conveyed in a particular, programmed form and - certainly in the case of Sep. and Ag. - this form is in itself of profound significance to the meaning of the whole play.

Each scene is a bravura performance with words but, in great contrast with the messenger scenes and speeches of the other two playwrights, referential function is often outweighed by a great emphasis on the phatic and metareferential.

\textsuperscript{50}Although it is only later that we learn from Darius, who continues the account of the Persian army's return 800-815, that when in Greece soldiers violated the sanctity of temples.

\textsuperscript{51}For Darius, all details subsequent to the crossing of the Hellespont are redundant: this act alone revealed divine displeasure (724 and 5) and was sufficient to bring about the fulfillment of oracles predicting ruin (739-52).

\textsuperscript{52}Cf. p. 35.
Verbal communication in drama has been divided into six separate functions, in accordance with its association with six different constituent elements of drama. Of course, as Pfister 105 notes, dramatic language is multifunctional and any dramatic utterance is likely to fulfil several functions in both the internal and external system simultaneously. All the same, in these scenes the phatic function, which highlights the process of communication, is often particularly marked.

A minor example of marked phatic emphasis is evident at Supp. 234f. where the chorus and Pelasgus call for mutually identifying narratives in an elaborate recognition/greeting scene. The repeated references to speaking, saying, naming, declaring, remain largely unsubordinated to what is being said, creating a highly formalised situation onstage in which attention is focused on each successive act of narrating, and the reciprocal listening and responding. The structure is not so much, "What is your name?" but "Make a declaration of your name to me."

When attention is focused on the act of communication, the drama perhaps tends to become less autonomous in its showing and more mediated. The internal and external systems, usually kept apart, begin to coincide and the audience (to whom, of course, all speech in drama is ultimately directed) is alerted to take note of distinctive telling, with emphasis on the addresser, the addressee, and the process of communication itself as much as on the content.

It is the sustained use of the phatic function which helps to frame and shape the three scenes under discussion. In Ag. the focus on the difficulties of communication between the chorus and Cassandra contributes to one of the major themes of the play; in Sep. the great concentration of effort displayed by Eteocles in his attempts to interpret the Scout’s communications, helps to heighten the audience’s receptivity to the language games at work in the scene. The phatic function in PB. draws attention to the repeated re-arrangement of narrative material in that scene.
Each scene capitalises on the time-scheme already established to create powerful effects. In terms of Aeschylus' narrative pendulum, the rhythm quickens. Areas previously swept over (narrative gap) are now visible. In each scene the major concerns of the play are intensified and manifested more clearly.

The marked increase in revelation is made possible by the exceptional qualities of the major narrator. Major messengers in Aeschylus (apart from Pers.) are figures of exceptional powers, very different from anonymous reporters. Their extraordinary qualities are stressed: Eteocles can find repeated cledones in the information the scout gives him; Cassandra is a prophetess inspired by Apollo; Prometheus is the son of Themis who has told him all the future (101-5; 209-21; 873-4;913-5).

It is clear that the range, function and general effect of these message scenes is far wider than that of the "classic" group, in the sense that the time of the information given is certainly not restricted to the recent or immediate past. Motivated by a crisis, Aeschylus' narrators widen out the temporal perspectives of the drama enormously; their elaborately-structured narrative sequences tie together past, present and future to create an essentially predictive effect. The delivery of "advance information" is particularly important in those scenes which come from first plays of trilogies (Ag. and PB); in Sep., final play, the past too is suddenly revealed and leads to closure.

These panoramic scenes do not deliver the moment of outcome, like the messages of, for example, Sophocles' Theban plays. Outcome, however, is extremely close in both Sep. and Ag. In Sep. it erupts from the same scene, in Ag. it follows after a choral interlude of only twelve verses. PB. is different, offering no outcome with the play's compass at all. It is interesting to see that Sep. and Ag. contain, in their own proleptic and idiosyncratic ways, much of the narrative detail one would expect to find later in a conventional message narrative. It is the Shield scene that gives us the disposition and elaborate detail of the champions, whereas no detail is admitted into the messenger's brief report. Cassandra's far-reaching visions include, in brief snatches, most of the details of Agamemenon's death we are going to get (apart from hearing the victim's offstage cries and Clytemnestra's exultant, justificatory description 1382-92).

\[\text{See p. 44.}\]
\[\text{A narratological way of expressing this would be to say that partial analepses are now completed: thus at Sep. 70 Eteocles refers to his father's curse and Erinys without putting them into any chronological sequence. This partial analepsis is completed at 653-5 when we finally gain an understanding of how they fit into the sequence of onstage events.}\]
\[\text{Griffith's view, however, is that PB. is the middle play in the sequence P. Porphoros, P. Desmotes and P. Lyomenos.}\]
\[\text{Even here, however, there is at least a trace of the same shaping: after the Io scene the violent dialogue between Hermes and Prometheus culminates in Prometheus' engulfment, foreshadowed if not actually predicted earlier in the wish of 153-60.}\]
All three scenes occur well on in their respective plays, at or after the mid-point, and in importance must be seriously considered as the central scene. Thalmann (1978, 28) gives a diagram showing Sep. as a ring structure with the Shield scene (369-719) at its centre. The Io scene (PB. 561-886) is at the heart of the drama, functioning as a kind of play within a play. The Cassandra scene (Ag. 1072-1330) holds the key position between the scene of Agamemnon's return and his murder. Positioned as they are, these scenes can readily capitalise on themes and issues already substantially raised.

de Hoz, in his study of Pers. and Sep., aligns the Shield scene with the Pers. messenger scene and coins the phrase recurring narrative anaptyxis to describe them. In his opinion, the two scenes share the following characteristics: each contains rheseis with a shared field of content; the units between are "empty" making it possible to see the rheseis as one long rhesis; the scenes are characterised by abundance, insistence and repetition, and by the establishment of a scale of values which is different from the sequential order; (e.g. the seven dispositions that Eteocles makes do not build up regularly to a crescendo). These points are interesting considerations which could apply to the scenes of the later plays Ag. and PB as well, with which de Hoz does not deal. I would however, disagree that the units between the rheseis of any of the plays are in any useful sense "empty"; in my view they are a vital part of the meaning of the scene.

de Hoz also holds the view that in these scenes events are made more specific "but not altered". This is an odd remark to make about Aeschylus (not to mention Greek tragedy in general) where events are always presented as ultimately determined by divine power; alteration of events is not really an issue. However, alteration in understanding - often ironic - is very much to the point, and all these scenes dramatically increase the sum of knowledge, externally if not internally. Communication and understanding, frequently an overt issue in tragedy, is very much at issue in all three of these scenes. In Sep. there is Eteocles' famous outburst of understanding at 652; in Ag., while the audience learn much, and Cassandra comes to an understanding of her imminent death, Aeschylus is at pains to point up that the chorus cannot take in what Cassandra tells them; in PB. the three-way discussion about what may and may not be known receives almost as much attention as the information itself.

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"At the deep structure level, the scene is in fact redundant to the plot of Ag. itself; its significance is (a) thematic and (b) in relation to the development of the entire trilogy.

"See p.7.
4.2.1 Septem 369-719

Frame, structure, verbal function.

There are seven messenger speeches to which Eteocles responds seven times, after each of which the chorus sing a brief song. The numerical ordering of the Argive heroes is heavily marked; after Tydeus comes Capaneus, ( ὁ δ' ἄλλος, says the scout at 424, and Eteocles begins his response with καὶ τῷ δὲ, 437. We have τρίτῳ τὸ ἄλλος (458) introducing Eteocles, τέταρτος ἄλλος (486) for Hippomedon, πέμπτων...πέμπταις (526-7) for Parthenopaeus, Amphiareus is ἔκτος (568), Polyneices τόν ἔβδομον...ἐβδομάς πύλας (631). Each Argive attacks a named Theban gate to which the previous ceremony of the lot assigned him: all these details reinforce the structure.

The repeated patterning of the speeches is not only retrospectively understood by the audience, however: the pattern begins to be established from early on, e.g. 42f., 56-8, the vexatious 282-6. At the opening of the scene itself, the unusual double entry of Eteocles and the scout (369-74) and the repeated σαυδή/σουδή of the entry speech (371 and 374) create, on the visual level, an immediate image of two men as a critically opposed pair, one speaking for each side. The exchanges begin with the scout saying that he knows the disposition of the enemy at each of the seven gates (Εἴκαστος, 376) before going on to describe the first enemy, Tydeus, and asking Eteocles to make a counter-disposition. After Eteocles has responded the first time and the chorus have responded to his response, the audience know what shaping to expect - that this pattern will be repeated another six times. The phatic function - verbs of speaking at 373, 375, 400, 451, 457, 489, 490, 526, 553, 568, 631-2 - continuously reinforces the structure. Because Aeschylus has not in any sense adopted a naturalistic approach, attempts to find stage action which will naturalise or rationalise may consequently be futile. He expresses a conflict that is perhaps essentially to be understood not as an action but as a significant "still": as on a coin or frieze, seven Theban champions stand forever urgently at the Seven Gates to face their Argive opponents.

Each of the Scout's ornate descriptions of a champion and his shield device is countered by a parallel description from Eteocles. Hybristic boasts are "turned" by a

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62 See Taplin 77, 142-6 who suggests the lines may be interpolated or displaced. Hutchinson refers to Pers. 521-31 and considers both as examples of useful preparation and deception combined.

63 See Taplin ibid. 149: "The visual handling of the entries sets the pattern for the seven pairs of speeches, each reply of Eteocles meeting perfectly each challenge set up by the Scout."
more modest approach. For the Scout's *rheses*, de Hoz 226-7 finds the pattern: identity - position - attitude - aspect - description of shield. This pattern is set up and repeated through the first few speeches so that later variations will be perceived as such. Eteocles' counter-descriptions, concluding with the choice of opponent, are similarly programmed so that any deviation is a source of immediate and close attention, provoking from the audience efforts of interpretation - the activity Eteocles himself is engaged in.

The "turning" is done by playing on the metareferential function of communication. The Scout's *rheses*, as they leave his lips, appear to have only a simple referential function, merely to offer a description. Eteocles, however, finds *cledones*. Like a dream or portent, every detail is capable of yielding an interpretation favourable to the interpreter, and Eteocles has the ability to produce readings which mean a victory for Thebes; he can indeed λέγειν τὰ κατάρια. The exact way in which each threat is "turned" varies each time, and the complexity of detail within the structure is set to defy any simple (or indeed sophisticated) reading. The scene, which makes so conscious its own discourse, could serve as a paradigm to demonstrate the plurality of the text, as the variety of critical interpretations indicates.

Unique in this scene is the way the slippery, predictive power of language is tied down so firmly into each of Eteocles' responses to the Scout. Through the descriptive

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65 de Hoz 228, "... partly because of the very fact that it is repetitive, a sort of movement, a differentiating tension can be discerned."

66 For literature on *cledones* see Peradotto 1969; Cameron *op.cit.* esp. 95-7; Roberts *op. cit.* 1984, 14ff. and Goldhill 1984 pp.21-4. The latter's discussion of mantic prophecy, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of metaphor, Aeschylean griphos and the "sliding sign" applies as much to this scene of *Sep.* as to its primary target, the *Oresteia*.

67 "Language has an intrinsic potency and "word and name do not merely have a function of describing or portraying, but contain within them the object and its real powers. Word and name do not designate and signify, they are and act." (E. Cassirer, *Philosophy of symbolic forms II: mythical thought*, translated R. Mannheim, New Haven, 1955. Quoted by Peradotto 1969 6.)

68 This sense of language as metareferential, a potentially dangerous signifier with the power to predict, is expressed sporadically throughout Aeschylus in various ways: the desire to avoid unfavourable language (e.g. *Ag.,* 1247); calls for silence (Eteocles' struggles with the women); apotropaic formulae (expressions such as ὃ μη γένοιτο, *Sep.* 5); γρίφοι, finding meaning in names (in *Ag.,* Apollo, ἀκόλουθον ἔμως, 1081; Zeus, διὸ ἄδος, 1485; Helen, ἀλένας ἔλανδρος ἔλεητολος, 689-90). In our scene, Amphibiasus finds Polyneices' name resonant with meaning (576ff.: see Hutchinson for a discussion of the difficulties of the text at this point). Fear that a name might turn out to be ἐξόνυμος is frequently expressed.

69 "The secret of the defence of the city does indeed lie, as Eteocles claims in the first line, in saying what is proper" (Cameron 97); "Eteocles' words ... are as good as action, and ... for the audience they are supposed to be translated into action off-stage." (Taplin 155-5).
powers of their two contrapuntal sets of narratives, the seven pairs of contestants and their agones achieve virtual reality.\textsuperscript{69} Furthermore, although the outcome of each single combat is treated as yet to be known, the visible control over the entire situation exercised by Eteocles up to 652 can leave little doubt that the result will be in Thebes' favour.\textsuperscript{70} The effect is similar to that of the carpet scene of \textit{Ag.}, where Clytemnestra's superior \textit{peitho} and verbal agility is successful in bringing Agamemnon over the tapestries and into the house.

It is striking that the controlling structure is not abandoned when Polyneices is described at the seventh gate; despite the emotional outburst of 652, Eteocles' response to this champion comes in the same form as his response to the others, and the continuance of this formal pattern past the powerful moment of recognition helps mark out all seven confrontations as part of the inevitable design of the gods. Six of these Eteocles could counter, while the seventh is his doom; here structure contributes to meaning, form to fate. The entire shaping leading up to the revelation of Polyneices works to reinforce the idea of the two brothers as an identical pair; after this point the language too can stress the pairing: \varepsilon\varphi\chi\omicron\omicron\upsilon\tau\iota \tau\iota \varphi\chi\omicron\omicron\nu\nu \kappa\alpha\alpha\iota\iota\gamma\iota\nu\iota\tau\iota\varphi\omicron\omicron \kappa\alpha\iota\sigma\iota\iota\sigma\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron (674-5).

In the ensuing scene of \textit{peitho} between the chorus and Eteocles, we do not expect Eteocles to be convinced that this encounter, any more than any of the others, can be avoided. Eteocles has been shown to be no longer the authoritative narrator of the future but merely a puppet in another narrative fixed earlier. This does not make the cledones null and void, but it puts them into another perspective and indicates that the quasi-mantic activity Eteocles has been engaged in is of limited authority: \omicron\omicron\delta \epsilon\lambda\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \gamma\iota\nu\gamma\nu\tau\tau\iota \tau\alpha \sigma\iota\mu\iota\tau\iota\alpha (397) can apply both ways: he must give way before the oracle and the curse, whose language has higher power.

\textit{Time and PPDCs.}

The use of time in this scene is extraordinary. It begins with a sense of extreme urgency\textsuperscript{71} which has in fact been strongly developed throughout the play so far; The

\textsuperscript{69}In his understandable eagerness to visualise the onstage action, Wiles seems to have succumbed to the sheer narrative power of this scene to make concrete what is adequately left to the imagination. Cameron, 101, makes the point "The important thing that he (Eteocles) is doing in these speeches is verbal".

\textsuperscript{70}Although the chorus' reactions remain hesitant; see Winnington-Ingram 1983 on this. I note it is only after the fourth disposition that they state confidently \kappa\pi\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron (521)

\textsuperscript{71}Stressed in the entry speeches 371 and 374.
Argives champions had much earlier been selected and sworn a mighty oath (at 42ff.), and in the parodos the Theban women described their acute, uncontrollable fear at the sights and sounds of the host already approaching over the plain towards them (78-180). Yet Eteocles has spent his time so far dealing with the emotions of the chorus rather than making dispositions against the Argive champions.

The sense of acute crisis is soon suspended within the scene itself, however, creating a delay. There are several reasons for this: firstly, onstage narrative inevitably constitutes a "still" in terms of what goes on on stage, in the sense that no new character will enter and no topic other than the information to be communicated will be raised until the narrative is over. Time becomes elastic and Eteocles has as much of it as he wants to counter each of the Scout's narratives. The process of description and counter-description with all its elaborate detail and interpretation holds our attention in its own right. It takes place in a present that becomes almost timeless.

The sense of timelessness is assisted by the present tenses used by the Scout, and also by the offstage dictates of Amphiaraus.

Amphiaraus, apart from his many other functions in this scene, is explicitly in control of offstage, Argive action. He both locks and unlocks their movement. Almost the first piece of information learnt from the Scout is that Amphiaraus has forbidden the Argives to cross the Ismenus and attack (377f). The enemy, fully armed, are thus frozen in full armour until we hear of Amphiaraus' counter-order in the direct speech of παραπερατωρ (589). From this point on, the pendulum starts to swing again.

In this here-and-now present (which is also, for all the reasons just mentioned, as well as through its extreme artificiality of structure, a timeless present) Eteocles finds his cledones. Without being a magician or prophet, his ability with language is certainly mirrored in Amphiaraus' offstage mantic skill. Eteocles' words stand in for actions offstage and they also predict the outcome of the contests; so this special onstage present is also indicating an immediate and a slightly more remote future.

This brings us to the problem of the tenses used for the verbs in which the postings are made. In my own view the variation can indicate nothing else except a sensitive manipulation of all the different time frames at issue in this scene; by using present, future and past tenses all three time schemes can be kept in play (probably

72Unless one holds the view that the Theban warriors are onstage and sent off as each selection is made; see Wiles and following note.
73Wiles ingeniously suggests that, just as the Argives cast lots at 55ff., so now in this scene do the Thebans. The variation in tenses is explained by relating each verb to a throw of the lot just made or just about to be made.
unnoticeably in performance) to be reactivated or dropped when required. Such boldness of narrative technique is unparalleled but not impossible, given Aeschylus' narrative boldness elsewhere.\footnote{In creating delays, for example, or surprises. See 55ff.}

Aeschylus' task is to bring the events of the entire trilogy to a satisfying conclusion. We know that the oracle to Laius, its fulfilment by Oedipus, and Oedipus' curse directed at his sons have, however presented, already played their part (in some fashion) in the workings of the earlier plays, and would consequently be present in the audience's mind. They would already have seen or heard of outcome in the murder of Laius by his son, and the dramatic presentation of Orestes' understanding of his parricide and incest. They would have heard the curse against the sons, and be waiting for its fulfilment. By a bold stroke, all reference to this fulfilment has so far been delayed on a temporary basis in this third play so as to focus on the success of Eteocles' planning; the pay-off will come at the tremendous moment of his outburst at 653, an anagnorisis and peripeteia which marks a total shift of direction and temporal perspective.

The effect is particularly rich because this scene, with its cledonic structure, was already showing one kind of prophetic outcome of which Eteocles was in charge, as he countered the messenger's descriptions of each warrior with his own narrative; he was clearly controlling the outcome of each duel in advance. Now, however, from within the same structure of control and containment, another kind of overwhelming outcome erupts; Eteocles' cry of recognition 653-5, ὁ ... ᾧ ... ὑμοί, πατρὸς δὴ νῦν ἀροί τελεσφόροι brings back all the previous PPDC elements of the trilogy in a rush.

Eteocles' varied replies to the Scout's descriptions, their three futures, two perfects, an aorist and a present, seem to have considerable bearing on the time scales operating here. Winnington-Ingram is surely correct in saying that they are not arranged at random: we begin logically with a future (408) and return to the future when the sense of urgent time begins to bite again (the posting of Amphiaraus' opponent Lachtyes is in the future (621). In between, the present, aorist and perfect tenses connect up tangentially to this somewhat surreal onstage present. Do they point externally to the eternal present of the popular myth of the Seven Against Thebes, who are and always will be these well-known figures?
The more important reference, however, is internal, and to the entire trilogy. The past tenses delicately adumbrate the pre-determined pattern events must take, and the slight logical incongruity seems a tiny price to pay for the resulting effect. After the revelation of Polyneices, what has been seen as developing freshly moment by moment before our eyes, something new and in human control, is equally to be understood as part of something old and inevitable, the fulfilment of Oedipus' curse. The shaping of the whole play is made so as to show, through the figure of Eteocles, the ability of the past to fix the apparently fluid present.\(^7\)

The narrative pendulum which became unstuck, as it were, at Amphiaraus \(\mu\alpha\chi\omega\mu\epsilon\theta\), now sweeps back in time. PPDC elements of the trilogy, especially Oedipus' curse, re-emerge and the historic perspective engulfs the present and immediate future.

4.2.2 Cassandra scene 1072-1330

Fraenkel, Denniston and Page, Taplin and Goldhill\(^7\) have each analysed this scene in their own distinctively different ways; this section is a synthesis of their views (which are so disparate as to provide no real clash) expressed in the narratological terms of this thesis.

Context

Cassandra is vital to convey information about past, present and future to the external audience, and to give them a greater understanding of the shape not only of this play but of the entire trilogy.\(^7\) At the same time, her information needs to be conveyed

\(^7\)The past creating a present that is immutable is well conveyed in explanations of the use of the perfect tense of some verbs in Greek, such as \(\pi\epsilon \nu \kappa \epsilon \kappa \alpha\), \(\tau\epsilon \theta \nu \kappa \epsilon \kappa \alpha\), \(\gamma \epsilon \gamma \nu \nu \epsilon \nu \), \(\kappa \kappa \kappa \lambda \delta \gamma \theta \alpha\). (See Goodwin 270, section 1263.)

\(^7\)Fraenkel's concluding discussion on this scene (vol. III, pp. 623-7) is still acute and sensitive; Denniston and Page pp. 164-6 offer an extremely clear (if somewhat simplified) break-down of its complex structure; Taplin's wizardry with the full meaning of the exits and entrances in the scene produces excellent insights (1977, 316-322), and Goldhill 1984, 81ff. highlights the narrative and linguistic dilemmas of the play at this point.

\(^7\)Taplin 316 contrasts this scene with the preceding one. He holds the view that the carpet scene is meant to raise "unanswered questions, ... uncompleted trains of thought, ... unsolved enigmas." The following scene with Cassandra then solves "many of the enigmas set by the first thousand lines of the play... It is Cassandra's place to lead the chorus, and us, out of confusion and perplexity towards insight and perspective" (322). This is probably too black and white; one cannot guarantee the level of insight a diverse audience would acquire. The scene abounds in its own confusions.
in a way that is thoroughly in line with the ideology of the rest of the play.\(^78\) It is the feat of this scene to communicate so much information externally to the audience while at the same time giving a moving display of the failure of communication between the prophetess and the chorus (painfully highlighted by Cassandra's comment, 1254, and the chorus' capping remark). Such inadequacy on the chorus' part helps prepare for their incompetence when Agamemnon's cries are heard.

Simultaneously in this scene, Cassandra gives voice to a pitiful and unusual lament for herself as she moves inexorably offstage to her death.\(^79\) Cassandra's fate, a side-issue in terms of the trilogy, becomes the uppermost concern of the scene. It is an issue the chorus can understand better than her prophecies. By the end of both lyric and trimeter sections these have faded in comparison with the sympathy her imminent death evokes. Without ever detaching Cassandra's fate entirely from Agamemnon's, Aeschylus subtly makes use of the chorus' focus on Cassandra's pitiable situation to draw our attention away from Agamemnon's coming murder.

Cassandra's ability to describe the future to some extent balances the chorus' earlier authority to describe the past; if the chorus provided the opening background information, much of which concerned Troy, Trojan Cassandra supplies us with the knowledge we need to carry us past the stark ending of this first play through to Cho, and the rest of the trilogy. In fact, the barbarian slave knows more than any other character in Ag., even Clytemnestra, and her knowledge springs infallibly from direct contact with a god. By showing this infallibility operating through a narrator doomed to offer her privileged knowledge to the incomprehension of the chorus, Aeschylus creates powerful effects of irony and pathos which make this scene perhaps the richest development of one of the major themes of the play; the breakdown in communication.\(^80\) The scene contributes to the polarities of truth/deceit, speech/silence, ignorance/knowledge already in operation in the play.

Cassandra's scene of prophecy is significantly preceded by her onstage silence throughout the carpet scene and by her silent presence throughout the ensuing lyric.

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\(^78\) Does Aeschylus create the prototype of frenzied prophetess here in this play out of the thematic requirements of this drama? \(\text{Il} 13.366\) and \(24.699\) knows her only as Priam's daughter. Her early sighting of the returning Priam is not cast as a vision. \(\text{Cf. Schol. Homer. \Omega} 699\) (V 632 Erbse): \(οὔ γὰρ οἶδαν ὁτί \(\text{κασσανόδραν} \) μᾶλλον \( \delta \) ποιητής. \) However, in Proclus' \(\text{Argumentum to the Cyprus}, \) Cassandra as well as Helenusutter prophecies when Paris sets sail to \(\text{κασσανόδραν} \) τῶν \(\muελλόντων \) \(\rhoοδιλιοί\) (Bernabé, 1987, 39, 111), and Pindar \(\text{Pan.} 8a\) (fr. \(52i\) [A] Meehler) confirms Cassandra as a prophetess, although not necessarily one gripped by \(\muενία\).

\(^79\) Cf. \(\text{Ant.} 806-928\): Sophocles may well be imitating this scene.

\(^80\) Cf. Goldhill 81 on "the problem of exchange of language."
When the eye rests on her, or when Agamemnon refers to her (τὴν ξένην, 950ff.) she is a mere silent witness, unnamed until 1035.

Though still silent she becomes the centre of attention in the pre-scene in which Clytemnestra, attempting to induce her to make the same fatal journey into the house as Agamemnon, is seen to fail. Clytemnestra and the chorus (who politely suggest compliance with their mistress 1049 and 1054-5) discuss Cassandra over her head. Is the reason for her silence ignorance of Greek (1051, 1060) - perhaps an interpreter is required (1062) - or psychological damage (1064ff.)? There is even a suggestion that she use gesture to communicate (φράσε καρβάνος χερί, 1061).

All this emphasises Cassandra's resolute refusal to speak, for which we are never given a motive. The effect is significant in several ways. We see that communication requires the participation of two parties; faced with unbroken silence, communication fails. Cassandra's refusal to share communication with Clytemnestra is a form of success which contrasts with Agamemnon's fatal compliance.

By remaining silent, Cassandra is also, more than ever, emphasised as an outsider, not just because a barbarian and a slave, but in terms of the established, Clytemnestra-dominated communication system of the play. Her "outsiderness" has rich implications throughout the following scene: despite their sympathy the chorus, her internal audience, fail fully to "accept" or "hear" her. The phatic, appellative and metalingual codes, used quite differently from the way they are used in the Redepaare scene of Sep., repeatedly point chorus and Cassandra away from each other. Indeed, the failure of communication is thematised by Cassandra's revelation (1212) that Apollo has doomed her to prophesy without being believed. On the other hand, her "outsiderness" aligns with the external audience, who are likely to understand her very well.

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81See Taplin 316ff.
82A scene of great interest in an analysis of narrative function because it neither furthers the action of the immediate plot nor helps to illuminate the trilogy as a whole.
83Clytemnestra's eισεν κοιμηθεία, 1035, is important in providing the overall frame of movement in the Cassandra scene; more clearly than with Agamemnon, we experience her final movement into the reeking house (after three hesitations) as a movement into death. She actually says, "I address these doors as the doors of Hades," 1291. See Taplin 317ff.
84Although we see that her silence has to do with Clytemnestra's presence. She starts to move and speak when Clytemnestra departs and the chorus disassociate themselves from the Queen's sharpness with their gentle words 1069-71. Sustained reluctance to speak or engage in conversation is a fairly common dramatic feature. See, for example, Teiresias' reluctance OT 316ff., and Oedipus' QC 1169ff.
Structure

Aeschylus has not here created a formal structure which contributes as fundamentally to the movement of the play as the paired speeches of Sep. All the same, the intricacies of the "lyric plus rhesis" structure are illuminating.

By using both lyric and trimeter, the same narrative material receives different treatments, and the poet can tease out themes, motifs, developments and relationships which play to the strengths of either genre. Aeschylus conveys the murder of Agamemnon and the plan of the trilogy both in immediate, allusive lyric and in the more rational logos of iambic trimeter.

In other such epirrhetic scenes in Aeschylus (eg. Supp. 347ff., Sep. 203ff.) the metrical pattern is more regular and the contrast between speaker(s) and singer(s) remains constant. In this scene, the two slightly interweave to heighten the tension delicately, and underline the themes of the scene. The failure of Cassandra to get her information across to the chorus in either genre is overtly pointed up; she fails both as the mad prophetess in frenzied lyrics and as a calmer, more statesman-like Teiresias-type of soothsayer in iambic trimeters.

Aeschylus uses the difference between the two genres to create a gap. In the first half, Cassandra thrillingly describes her hallucinations in lyric - a bath, a hand, a net - while the chorus, who do not see what she sees, respond in iambic trimeters. Their flat comments seem to undercut Cassandra's passion ("very dull," comment Denniston and Page on 1088-9). Then from 1121 the chorus break into lyrics too - dochmiacs expressive of their fear. Fear does not sharpen their powers of understanding however, and it is Cassandra who now begins to "climb down" from her frenzy, show an increased awareness of her surroundings, and adopt some iambic trimeters: "Puis Cassandre commence à se recueillir tout en continuant de chanter ses visions, elle les fait toujours suivre d'un distique déclamé; les deux trimètres passent du choeur à la voyante. C'est ainsi que se prépare la prophétie claire et suivie en trimètres non cadencés." The ending of this section shows the original positions reversed: Cassandra has trimeters 1171-2, the chorus lyrics 1173-7.

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45"... Nowhere else has the combination of the two elements produced such a marvellous effect as in the Cassandra scene. All that is characteristic of either of the two forms seems here to have found its most powerful expression, and where the limits of the one are reached, the other assists and supplements it so as to provide the whole scene with immense scope and depth." (Fraenkel 623)

46H. Weil, Études sur le drame antique, 270ff., quoted by Fraenkel 540.
At this point of reversal, the iambic trimeter section of the scene begins with Cassandra's resonant verse which so markedly points to a new phase in the communication process: καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ´ ἐκ καλομμάτων...87 Visions are to be replaced with rhesis, with all its implications of logically and temporally related clauses. The hallucinatory material is now presented again,88 and should certainly be better understood by the audience,89 who are now given the terminus post quem of the troubles in the house of Atreus,90 an outline of the plot of Cho. and, in the description of the Erinyes, a pointer towards the action of Eum., an understanding of which is a necessary antecedent for closure. Cassandra sometimes speaks out as clearly as a Teiresias-style prophet, eg. ἐκ τῶν ἀποτανάσις φημι 1223, ἥξει γὰρ .. τιμάορος 1280. The chorus note the change, "when you speak clearly and not in pictures"(1244).

Yet it is in this very metre, in the centrally-positioned stichomythia of 1202-1212, that the utter uselessness of all of Cassandra's communication is revealed, in her account of her relationship with Apollo; the god has prescribed that her prophecies should fail to convince (1212). From this point the audience are cued to know that only they can be recipients of her prophecies.

Cassandra's rheseis do more in fact than exhibit and exploit the typical features of iambic trimeter verse; they also undermine it in various ways. For example, after the striking beginning of 1178-9 with its clearly expressed simile (like a bride from her veil) comes the complex and condensed images well analysed by Silk, 1974 197.91 Clarity is destroyed in the multiple reference of these lines. As Rosenmeyer acutely points out, Cassandra hovers "on the boundary between hallucination and explanation"; two of her three rheseis are initiated not by normal exchange of dialogue but by yet more bursts of prophetic vision (very similar to the stings felt by Io - see below). Despite the changed metrical form, clear signification is still difficult: we see this later with τι νῦν καλοδέχοι δοσφιλὲς δάκος τύχομι ἄν; (1231-2); here what she should call what she sees is not very different from the difficulty in the lyric section of identifying what she sees (much of Cassandra's lyric is cast as "What's this?" rhetorical questions, eg. 1100, 1101, 1107, 1109, 1114).

Clytemnestra is alluded to in terms of various monsters but not actually named. The

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87Fraenkel notes how ἐκ καλομμάτων (1178) ... ἔξαντημάτων (1183) form a prooemium to what follows.
88There is a parallel also in the ordering of material: both lyric and iambic sections begin with a general picture (1090ff., 1186ff.,) which then moves on to Thyestes' banquet (1096ff., 1217ff.)
89How much they understand is of course debatable, but 'Ἄγαμον οὐκ εἶναι ἐπόδεσθαι μύρον, 1246, seems unequivocal.
90This is given in the phrase ἔμετρος, 1192, to describe Thyestes' adultery with Atreus' wife.
91See also Goldhill 1984, 85 and Rosenmeyer 1982, 125
chorus clearly fail to understand (1242-5): but even before they express their incomprehension yet again, Cassandra has herself succumbed to the chorus' own earlier failing as narrator - she is too depressed, too fatalistic, to carry on: καὶ τῶν ὀμολον ἔτι μὴ πείθω. τί γάρ; τὸ μέλλον ἡςει (1239-40; cf. the chorus eg. at 251-2)

In her final rhesis 1256-94 Cassandra is at her clearest in describing the avenger to come (1280-1291): but this narrative is embedded within one describing her own decisions and actions and the chorus make absolutely no reference to it.

Timing

Delay: The Cassandra scene takes place at one second to midnight, as it were: Agamemnon has gone inside, and all the preparation to date leads us to expect his imminent death. Instead, we get this scene in which, like the Redepeare scene, the powers of a special narrator cause a great extension in the critical moments before the axe falls. We experience an unnatural timelessness: like the Redepeare scene, this scene is long and highly wrought with its own rhythms and pacing, and as long as it lasts, it delays the critical moment.

Rhythm and arhythmia: The timing of the exchanges tends not to follow normal dramatic discourse conventions. Cassandra is externally manipulated and does not control the time when each separate vision occurs and demands expression. To create such onstage immediacy and disjuncture is a tremendous coup de théâtre, all the more impressive if Aeschylus is largely innovating in making Cassandra a frenzied prophetess. Assisted by Cassandra's cries, questions, and general absorption in her own experience, the presentation is very similar to that of someone in great pain. Later she describes how it feels, still with involuntary cries of pain: με δεινὸς πόνος στροβεῖ (1215-16); οἴον τὸ πῦρ, ἐπέρχεται δὲ μοι (1256). A sympathetic production might emphasise the uncontrolled timing of these bursts of vision, with irregular silences between the strophes.

Cassandra's visions, in tantalising snatches of narrative, cover extensive reaches of time - past, immediate present, immediate future, and more remote future. Rather than separating these out into discrete sections (as one can imagine Euripides would),
Aeschylus juxtaposes them, allowing one sequence to develop, but then dropping without warning into another.

She begins rather generally (str. 3) and her narrative is set securely in the past (ant. 3). All the same, the shocking picture of Thyestes' children is an important if fragmentary allusion to a past in Argos not yet touched on in the play: this is important new information to the audience if not the chorus. However, without lingering, the pendulum moves quickly on to the immediate present with τι μηδεται; ... μηδεται (str. 4). Here begins what is in effect a simultaneous narrative which quickens its pace (τονχος γαρ τοδε έσται, 1110), and reaches its peak at 1128 with τοπτει πλην... To give what is actually a prophecy the immediacy of simultaneous narrative is a brilliant stroke.

In str. and ant. 6 and 7 Cassandra abandons events concerning the Atreidae and contemplates her own fate. Her understanding of her fate (cast in the form of the question at 1139) seems to be her own, and not the result of a vision at this point (the chorus cannot be a guide here). A lament about Cassandra and Troy occupies the rest of the lyric section; with typical mourner's achrony she alludes now to Paris' wedding day, now to her own childhood, the fall of Troy, futile sacrifices.

In the iambic trimeter section the general clarification of what has happened, is happening and will happen includes the establishment of a stronger chronology - in part at least: as in the lyric section the narrative is prone to abrupt changes of place and time. All the same, the beginning of the trouble is defined at 1192: the Erinyes are shown as a continuing presence in the house (1186); the murder of Agamemnon is presented as the logical consequence of Thyestes' banquet (εκ τωνδε, 1223). Cassandra's concentration on her own coming fate from 1256 onwards includes an account of Orestes' return from exile (alluded to again 1318-19). Much of this material has already been discussed under the heading of structure.

At the end of the scene, the fact that Cassandra three times delays her entry into the house and three times finds more to say before she goes, tends to emphasise the unnaturally vivid present time of the play, since it is set against the chorus' remark at 1300 and Cassandra's beautifully resigned response ηκει τοδε ημαρ (1301). This, and her remarks 1327-30 which close the scene, focus our attention almost exclusively on her plight as a timeless paradigm for the human condition. There is a powerful sense of closure here, which is at the same time a clever manipulation of

4Cf. p.25.
our responses: we have (I think) lost contact with what we were expecting at any moment from 1035 so that, despite the chorus' brief lyric attempt to grapple with the thought of imminent disaster for Agamemnon (1331-42), Agamemnon's cries come as a redoubled shock.

**Narrator-narratee**

Clytemnestra in the pre-scene could not establish contact with Cassandra and communication-failure, differently structured, carries over into this scene too: Cassandra can only partially convey her information to the chorus, even though they know from the outset that she is a seer.95

When Cassandra begins to sing, a totally new kind of voice comes into the play, highly disturbing and initially incomprehensible: her voice does not utter language, only cries and the name of Apollo. It is to Apollo that she addresses herself: ἄ, ποι ἴπ τοτ ἐγαγές με; πρός ποίαν στέγην; (1087) ποι ἀγ η με δεύρο τὴν τάλαιναν ἔγαγες ...; (1138). As with all frenzied prophecy, she does not directly address her audience, rather they overhear her involuntary utterances. These phatic codes and their different metres point narrator and narratee away from each other, opening a hermeneutic gap. Failing to get an answer to their question (1074), the chorus revert to talking about her in the third person as they did earlier (1078-9, 1083-4, 1093-4), commenting on her prophetic ability and their own powers of interpretation: but the way the chorus doggedly emphasise the validity of the very simple fact they utter 1088-9 (note the phatic emphasis of 1089) as though they, not Cassandra, were the significant narrators at this point, highlights the difficulties of their communication.

Cassandra's visions from 1090 make her a proleptic eye-witness of crucially important action occurring offstage in the play. However, unlike anonymous eye-witness messengers in later tragedy she is not presented as primarily concerned to narrate. Rather, like the narrator of simultaneous narrative, each strophe is as much an expression of her reaction to what she sees as descriptive of it. She produces incoherent cries (at the outset of each strophe), tears (1096), many apostrophes, and questions in the third person (1100-1, 1107-9, 1114, 1115), second person (1107), or first person (1109). She also gives something of a running commentary on her own ability to interpret what she sees (1095ff., 1101, 1161), just as the chorus do. In

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951083-4: it is not clear how they know.
terms of verbal functions, a profusion of emotive, conative, phatic, poetic and metalingual codes overwhelm the simply referential.

All the same, Cassandra is not totally oblivious to the chorus' responses; μὲν οὖν at 1090 and γάρ at 1095 show something of a reply,⁹⁶ σοι λέγω, 1129, indicates direct communication. What begins further "enmeshing" between the two parties, after the chorus have abandoned their staid trimeters for dochmiacs, is the chorus' sympathetic comparison of Cassandra's fate with Procne's (1140ff.): in the sequence that follows, although Cassandra still does not address the chorus directly⁹⁷ they are in stronger communication, demonstrably acting and singing as joint participants in lament. Throughout the entire scene, the chorus do not lack sensitivity and understanding when it is a question of Cassandra's own fate: but the central issue eludes them.

In the first réthesis of the second half Cassandra tries to involve the chorus directly as witnesses to prove her powers (μαρτυρεῖτε⁹⁸ ...ἐκμαρτύρησον 1184, 1196). The chorus are more interested in her relationship with Apollo (stichomythia 1203-1213), and by the end of her second speech it is clear to her that she has not got across to them, as the despairing conclusion 1239-41 indicates. At the beginning of the second section of stichomythia, a particularly clear statement from Cassandra (Ἄγαμέμνονός σε φημ' ἐπόνεσθαι μόρον, 1246) is still unaccepted. Although she goes on to say more that is vital to the trilogy, in this scene the chorus express no more concern for the future of Argos and restrict themselves entirely to Cassandra's own fate.

4.2.3. Prometheus Bound 560-886

The essentially narrative form of the Io scene is turned into a kind of game with rules set up and broken, diversions, delays and surprises.⁹⁹ Some of these gambits can be found in other scenes of the play as well,¹⁰⁰ but here they are presented in a uniquely

⁹⁶See Denniston and Page ad loc.
⁹⁷The chorus use second person markers at 1150, 1153, 1154, 1162, 1173, 1174; Cassandra only at 1158 - and she is addressing the Scamander.
⁹⁸The opening content of both lyric and trimeters sections is repeated: cf. Thyestes' weeping children invoked as witnesses μαρτυροῦσον, 1096.
⁹⁹The technique here seems almost as playful and in its own way as sophisticated as that of the Symposium, in which the drinkers' speeches on love are intercut with comments which cause delays and diversions away from the agreed order and where, all the while a frame of seeming arbitrariness is imposed on the entire proceedings, the audience/reader is in fact offered a continuous "reading" of the subject under discussion by the participants.
¹⁰⁰e.g. delay: Prometheus is prevented from prophesying his future by Oceanus' unexpected arrival at 284 and the chorus at
condensed form, so that the five major rheseis (excluding their non-narrative introductory or concluding passages) comprise only 33% of the total. As a comparison, in the previous episode this element constituted 57%.

The Io scene (perhaps not to be compared aesthetically with the scenes from the other two plays) is all the same particularly interesting from a narratological point of view, since attitudes to narrative and narrative itself sometimes become the overt subject of discussion between the three parties.

The use of Io superficially resembles Aeschylus' use of Cassandra. A girl, sexually desired and maddened by a god, is given a scene of onstage frenzy. Cassandra's cries are produced by bursts of prophetic inspiration, Io's by the sting of the gadfly. In a similar context of raw pain and vivid emotion a great deal of narrative is exchanged which points forward to future action in the trilogy. The information is, with typical irony, better understood by external than internal narratees. In each play the girl's suffering and her ultimate fate, linked in with that of the central figure (since both are victims of the same agent), becomes an object of strong but temporary narrative interest, rivalling and somewhat masking the central themes of the trilogy.

The Io scene diverts the audience. Prometheus is immobilised in a remote spot. He can do nothing at all and, except in the opening and closing scenes, nothing happens to him either. All that is possible is that he can be visited by others, and yet so far his fate, not anyone else's, is the exclusive topic of interest. The knowledge that Zeus is listening enormously heightens the tension, but all the same the play could be overly linear: Prometheus is the immortal, omniscient son of Themis and it is stressed that he has infinite narrative powers and indefinite leisure to exercise them. By contrast his visitors (apart from the bullies at the beginning and end) have little information to contribute. There are no major opportunities for recognition or reversal at this early stage. The new interest of Io's maddened, hyper-mobile state and the fluid, tri-partite structure of the scene provide an excellent antidote to this

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Note the derivation of Latin narrare from Sanskrit gna = know. Prometheus' prophetic narrative ability, inherent in his name, is emphasised throughout (but is reconfirmed 824ff. and 873-4). Io (because she is Prometheus' niece?) appears to have advance knowledge of his abilities. Aeschylus uses a variety of techniques in the opening section and later in this scene to limit his potentially inexhaustible narrative flow.

631 strongly intervene to postpone the account of Io's future.

101 The Io scene (561-886) is 326 lines of which 561-644, 683-706, 735-789, 816-845 and 873-886 are not continuous message narrative. The second episode (436-525) is 90 lines long. 436-442, 469-477 and 503-525 (39 lines) are its only non-narrative sections.

102 The chorus' lack of comprehension in Ag has already been discussed (59ff.). In this scene Aeschylus focuses on Io's acute suffering which makes her unable to comprehend the distant future. The chorus too are overwhelmed at 687-95 (tho' they recover quickly when P. rebukes them).

818, 875.
condition. Prometheus, in the previous scene portrayed as benefactor of mankind, can be seen giving onstage assistance, like a teacher warning, advising, sympathising, predicting reactions, dividing his attention between the two parties, recapping on the structure, at all times asserting his benevolent authority.

**Frame**

The entry of Io at 561 is a surprise to the audience, and attempts seem to be made to maintain the element of surprise throughout the scene. The disjointed, urgent questions of her anapaests and lyric monody set up a complex requirement for information falling into two groups: questions about Io herself (present and future - a new area of interest in the play) and questions about Prometheus (past and present). These questions initiate the elaborately programmed process of combining the future stories of Io and Prometheus which constitutes this scene (cf. 773-4, 871-3).

Io wants to know where she is, who Prometheus is, and why he suffers (561-5). Then she wants to know where she has to go and why Zeus makes her suffer (576-8). On Prometheus' recognition of her φήγμα (588-9), she breaks into even more disjointed questions. How does Prometheus know her? When will her sufferings end? (593-608). She demands that Prometheus *speak*, and the many synonyms for this activity, highlighting the phatic element, are clearly significant: the audience is to expect a narrative performance. Prometheus' response (609-10) indicates that she will readily get it:

\[\lambda \epsilon \xi \omega \ \tau o \rho \omega s \ \sigma o i \ \pi \alpha n \ \delta \pi e r \ \chi r \acute{\eta} \xi e i s \ \mu o \theta e i n,\]
\[o u k \ \varepsilon m p l \acute{e} k o w a i n i \gamma m a t ; \ \acute{a} l l \ \acute{a} p l \ddot{\omega} \ \lambda o g o . . .\]

However, neither here nor later does the playwright allow the narrative progression to become predictable. At this point stichomythia rather than *rhetos* unexpectedly develops as Io, once Prometheus has identified himself, asks the reason for his sufferings again, and between 615-630 Prometheus modifies and delimits his opening declaration in several ways: he has just stopped (615), he has said enough (621), it is better for Io not to know (624), or be shattered in her heart (624,628). A little later Prometheus signals for the second time that he is about to begin a continuous

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105 Many of these forms of narrative refusal have already been directed at the chorus in earlier scenes and will come into play again later in this scene: e.g. he may not speak (766), his audience would not benefit (876).
narrative (ἐκούει δή, 630), when this time it is the chorus, silent so far, who make a strong and unexpected intervention; μήπω γε, 631. They want to change the narrative rules and request both a change of subject and a change of narrator: let Io herself first of all describe her past, and then let Prometheus describe her future. This design is formally agreed (635-6, 640), then at least partially carried out until it falters (735) and a replacement plan is made (778ff.). At this point Prometheus offers Io a choice between two narratives: the rest of her travels (breaking his previous promise that she would hear this) or his future.107 The chorus demand both and ultimately get them, though not without further excursions en route, nor with sufficient fullness at the end.

The chorus are essential to sustaining the excitement and complexity of this scene. Although the communication is essentially binary between Io, narratee, and Prometheus, narrator, the chorus, for a chorus, play an unusually active role as a vociferous internal audience or secondary narratee. There is much question, refusal, promise, demand, denial over narrative between Io and Prometheus on their own as we have just seen, but it is the added voice of the chorus which constitutes the scene's essential shape. Without their intervention we should have no narrative delivered by Io herself. The effect of the chorus' contributions is to embed the narratives themselves into a three-way discussion of what often amounts to narrative procedure. The narrative flow is maintained at a complex level quite different from that of the previous scene. At the same time, the chorus as internal audience - like us, sympathetic but not directly affected - guide our own responses.

At 631 the chorus insisted on splitting the role of narrator between Io and Prometheus; at 782 they insist on splitting the role of narratee: let Io hear about her future, let them hear about Prometheus' (they remind him of this two-fold agreement 822). Their insistent presence is reflected in the stringency with which Prometheus summarises the course of the narratives so far (700ff.) and in his clear indication as to which of his two potential addressees he is communicating (700ff., 788, 842-5).

Because of the chorus' ability to make continuous rearrangements in the expected narrative order (secondary of course to Prometheus' own ability in this area), the scene is highly varied and enjoyable, despite the suffering of both Io and Prometheus, mobile and immobile, stretching far into the future. The chorus' interest and

107 Note that the embedded figure of Hypermestra is also faced with a choice between two courses: διοίγει δὲ ὅτερον θολείμα, 867.
curiosity throughout work on our own: we know that the time spent listening is an ἀξία τριβή (639).

The scene is self-reflexive, demonstrating that narrative performance gives pleasure, and the language of charis, and gifts reinforces this. In the previous scene Prometheus was celebrated as δώτης and ὁφέλημα to mortals; his gifts included all kinds of prophecy. Now he himself prophesies for and about a specific individual. The unstressed kin relationship between the three participants also links them suggestively together: charis surrounds Prometheus the benefactor, these kin relationships and the entire narrating situation.

As well as pleasure, however, the scene discourses on the pain that narrative may arouse: Io suffers, and Prometheus suggests that to relate her suffering to a sympathetic audience is worthwhile (637-9): the chorus react with extreme horror (687-95) but suggest all the same that Io's "sickness" will be alleviated by the knowledge of all she has to suffer (698-9), a view she holds herself (625, 629) against Prometheus' attempts at protection. Prometheus turns out to be right: his narrative reduces her to incoherence (742) and thoughts of suicide (747ff.). The gadfly sting drives her offstage without acknowledging receipt, so to speak, of Prometheus' final narrative.

Narrative sections

The five major iambic trimeter narratives are set into a fluid and lively context of female emotion - a contrast to the masculinity of Prometheus. The first is narrated by Io at the request of the chorus, the rest by Prometheus. Thus (1) 645-682 a narrative of Io's past is followed by (2) 707-735 Io's future wanderings, (3) 790-815 Io's future wanderings continued, (4) 829-841 Io's recent past, (5) 846-73 the story of Io's descendants including Prometheus' liberator. Something like the chronological pendulum discussed before is at work here. The element of surprise is also sustained in the progression: nothing in the dialogue sections helps us expect (2) and (3) to be

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108 χρηματικ and compounds referring specifically to the chorus (not merely Io, who as a direct participant naturally feels strongly) at 641, 701, 787; χαίρειν 783; προθύμωσθεν 786.
109 631, 698, 782, 821.
110 635, 782, 821.
111 616, 626, 778, 821-2.
112 The chorus are Io's aunts and their father is Prometheus' father-in-law (while Io's line, we learn, will one day produce Prometheus' liberator).
separate *rhereis*, and (4), introduced unexpectedly by Prometheus as proof of his prophetic abilities,\(^{113}\) runs into (5) without an intervention by another speaker.

In terms of the trilogy only (5), describing the birth of Heracles, is of relevance. Io's past and her future exotic peregrinations are redundant, just as the details in the Cassandra scene relating only to the prophetess's fate were. In that play and this, the "vital" information is introduced tangentially and elusively - in the "intermission" between narratives (2) and (3) and at the end of (5).

The first narrative contains many features of "classic" messenger speeches, giving it, however redundant, great performance potential in its own right: declaration of intent to narrate (641-2), emotional state of speaker (αἰσχύνομαι, 642)\(^{114}\), brief but vivid scene-setting (note imperfects 645-6 and 659), direct speech (647-54), indirect speech (665-8), and suffering of protagonist, which in this case consists of exile and metamorphosis (673f.). Io ends by neatly pointing forward to the next item of narrative on the programme (σήματε, 684) before closing the ring (683-5).

Prometheus' following speech, like other of his *rhereis*, takes the form of an exotic list rather than a narrative proper.\(^{115}\) The *Abbruch* at 735 is striking and introduces an extremely important "intermission" between narratives (742-85): by a sleight-of-hand technique used throughout the play, the prominent *rhereis* reveal little vital knowledge, this being reserved for the slippery gaps between.\(^{116}\) With apparent randomness, Io's talk of suicide (ἐπιπλῆται...πέδοι) produces an important shift. Prometheus puns on Io's remark that she will hurl herself down from a rock, declaring that she would certainly bear his misfortunes διοπετάως, since he is immortal and must endure until Zeus ἐκπέση (pun again) τῷ ὀμονίδως. The word-play delicately binds together Io, Prometheus and Zeus.\(^{117}\)

By this masterly casualness, Prometheus re-introduces one of the most important themes of the entire trilogy - the threat to Zeus' power. It is only to be touched on, and is left in a paradoxical and contradictory state. Two new potential narratives are begun but left unconnected. Io is baulked when she asks the name of the mother of

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\(^{113}\)Cf. Cassandra at Ag. 1087f. similarly proving her credentials to the chorus by describing the past before making predictions about the future.

\(^{114}\)Griffith argues that the variant δοῦρομαι is more psychologically appropriate; either way, an emotion is expressed.

\(^{115}\)Two of his lists are geographical, the third genealogical. The tone is strongly prophetic and each speech finally gives an aetiology (732-5, 813-5, 839-41, 846-873).

\(^{116}\)i.e. in the stichomythic or dialogue sections.

\(^{117}\)Griffith notes the continuing importance of the verb *ekpesein* (= be deposed from power) for the rest of the play (see note to 755-6).
the son who will be stronger than Zeus (first narrative line), but is then told that she will bear a son who will liberate Prometheus (second narrative line). The audience understand that the Titan and the daughter of Inachus are now linked into the future, but must share her comment "ὅδε ὀφικέτ ἐνεκυμβλητος ἱ χρήσιμοδία (775).

The characters return to discussing narrative procedure. Prometheus attempts to alter the rules by making Io choose between two possible narratives, either the previously agreed account of her future sufferings, only half described so far, or, developing the new thread, a story about the liberator. As at 631, the chorus now irrupt into the dialogue again, demanding both stories.

Prometheus consents and begins οὖν πρῶτον, Ἰοῖ (788) as if the second story was indeed to follow. However, there is another diversion until Prometheus, addressing himself to both narratees and using the language of "tracks" for "narrative paths" (τῶν πάλαι λόγων ἧς λογος), talks of the two stories coming together (ἐξ ταὐτόν, 845). The idea of a final, unified story uniting Io, Zeus and Prometheus is the more exciting because so long awaited and so readily delayed by all the disparate narrative requirements, conditions and resulting prophecies.

All the same, fresh ambiguities (no doubt deliberate) surround the account of the birth of Epaphos and the return to Argos of the Danaids. Zeus appears to have softened: Io will be impregnated without intercourse and Zeus will allow the Danaids' cousins to be murdered for attempting sex with them against their will. Hypermestra seems already a figure of compromise and reconciliation. But how can all this be reconciled with an antipathy between Prometheus and Zeus which is meant to last well beyond this point? Then too, mention of the liberator is restricted to the very end and framed between almost identical phrases indicating that more time would be needed to explain properly (see 870, 875). In effect we learn only one vital item of information and that is merely by inference - that the figure to free Prometheus is Heracles (τὸ δεῖσθαι ... ὁς ... λύσει 872-3).

PPDC elements.

Of the play in general, Griffith writes, "Every scene, except for the Prologue and the Ocean scene, is built around a prophecy of some kind from Prometheus" (Griffith 1983 16). Up to the Io scene, however, Prometheus has only spoken with any clarity about the past (his major speeches describe the battle with the Titans, 197ff., 340ff.,
benefits to mortals 436ff.). Prometheus releases information about the future in a more gradual, puzzling way. At 168-71 he predicts that Zeus will need his help; at 188-92 that Zeus will be compelled to seek reconciliation; at 256-9 he says that he will be released when Zeus says so. Then at 507-25 the question of Zeus' fall is openly raised, but Prometheus refuses to be explicit, in fact he asserts that it is in keeping silence that he will be able to escape (524-5). The arrival of Io with her questions prompts fresh information first about her own future and then, because the two are connected, his own. The developing sense of Prometheus' potential control over Zeus' future is greatly increased by the Io scene, and gives rise, after her departure, to the powerful assertion 908ff: ἕ μὴν ἔπι Ζεὺς, κατίπερ αὐθάδης φρενῶν ἔσται ταπεινὸς, οἰ ν ἔξαρτύεται γάμου γαμεῖν, δῶ αὐτὸν ἐκ τυραννίδος θρόνων τῇ ἱστεν ἐκβαλεῖ.

All the same, an audience still worshipping Zeus as father of all the gods could not feel this prophecy to be absolutely unequivocal. Furthermore, by the end of the play we still cannot see how Io's descendant will free Prometheus; Zeus' omnipotence is manifested by the fact that he has overheard everything that is said on stage, (in narratological terms he has functioned as an invisible, external narratee to the entire action of the play). Thus he can immediately send Hermes to carry out his commands; yet Zeus' extremely prompt reaction reinforces the idea that Prometheus' prophecies are to be fulfilled. The cumulative but confusing proleptic references create a strong interest in the action of the following play(s).

Despite the enormous amount of rhesis from Prometheus and the many questions of Io and the chorus, the amount of precise information about the future is carefully restricted. Other PPDC elements occurring in the Io scene have no proleptic importance. Io's account of her past mentions dreams (645f.) and repeated visits to oracles (658f.). Both these messages precisely carry out the desire of Zeus: the wooing dream voice (direct speech 647-54), and the eventual command of the oracle with its threat of the destruction to Inachos' family if the order is not obeyed, make this more than usually clear. Dream and oracles form part of the propaganda battle between Zeus and Prometheus and concern Io's past, not Prometheus' future.

In his strong speech following the Io scene, Prometheus refers for the first and only time to Cronos' curse on his son when Zeus deposed him (910-12). This curse, as Griffith remarks, receives no further mention in the play nor do references to it exist.

118 See above and also Griffith 16f.
119 See p.52.
elsewhere in ancient literature. (It could of course have been already described in the earlier P.Purphoros.) Its unique appearance is paralleled by Eteocles' bald mention of his dreams at Sep. 709f (see above). As with all PPDCs, a sense of coming doom is created. In the context of Prometheus' unbounded prophetic ability a confirmatory dream or portent would have little validity; confirmation from Cronos supplies more weight, but no great significance.

The Io scene magnificently opens the trilogy out into time and space. The descriptions of Io's wanderings over the world turn Prometheus' remote Scythian rock into a central cross-roads in world space, at the same time as the power of his narratives, reaching inexhaustibly into past and future, gives the scene an important central focus in time as well. The final narrative of Io's offspring, which describes the generations in Egypt and the generations in Argos before Heracles will be born, opens up a huge temporal perspective to the audience in which they realise that what they are seeing onstage belongs to a period of the very remote past. This sort of technique, which we have seen produced a sense of closure in Pers., here also prepares us for the closing scenes of this first play while at the same time the sheer magnitude of the vision offered will affect the audience' expectations for the subsequent plays.

4.3 Small messenger scenes: Sep. 792-820 and Supp. 600-624

Both these narratives are set between rich and beautiful choral passages. Although the information conveyed in the message is crucial, a major rhesis would interrupt the larger narrative structure which is conveyed in the flow of lyric. The brief messages could be viewed as, arguably, hardly more than a necessary central pivot for the display of lyric on either side. It is not surprising that such a superb lyricist as Aeschylus should have plotted his dramas in this way.

Similarities between the two speeches

The Sep. example is a complete episode in its own right,\(^{120}\) and Supp. appears to be so too, but as Danaus does not exit after delivering his message, the Supp. message is only the beginning of a scene which will continue with his second announcement --

\(^{120}\)Other short one-actor acts occur at Pers. 598-623 (Queen), Cho. 732-82 (Cilissa) and 838-54 (Aegisthus).
the not-so-imminent arrival of the Aegyptii. In both plays the chorus is the sole addressee. Both speakers make very similar opening declarations, telling the excited female chorus to take heart: ἰσμάτης τινάδες, μητέρον τεθραυματεύα (Sep. 792) and θαρσάτε θανατες, εὐ τά τῶν ἐγχυρίων, (Supp. 600). Both choruses have been earlier presented as waiting anxiously for an either/or result on which their lives might depend: in Sep. it is the win/lose outcome of the battle with the Argives, in Supp. the decision of the assembly whether to accept or refuse their supplication. The either/or outcome in each case recalls Bremond's narrative model and perhaps explains why tragic messengers so often have a manifest function of resolving an essentially binary either/or, good/bad, hope/fear situation - sometimes by revealing yet another (at least virtual) binary situation, just as Bremond's theory would predict.

There are opportunities for choruses on either side of message narrative to display a rich range of contrastive emotions; beforehand, desperate hopes and fears; afterwards, reactions to the news can be equally powerful - pitiful lamentation, or a paean or hymn of blessings. The fearful character of both these female choruses is splendidly exploited in lyric as their male enemies approach.

4.3.1 Septem

However they express it, most critics agree that Aeschylus operates an intricate narrative deceit on a uniquely large scale even for him. The outcome of the traditional story of the Seven Against Thebes was probably always notionally separable into two strands: (1) the Seven attackers were defeated and (2) Eteocles and Polynices killed each other. Thus two entwined schemes of knowledge are involved, (1) concerning the city and (2) the family. Earlier in the trilogy (as it appears from the second stasimon) Aeschylus created two PPDC narratives, the oracle to Laius and Oedipus' curse. The terms of the oracle connected family with city: the city's safety was in some way dependent on Laius dying without issue (as we glean from 745-9).

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121 See Taplin 1977,49-60, 167-9, 211-5 on scene division in general and in the relevant plays.
122 Once an outcome is 100 per cent good or bad, there must be a new development or the narrative comes to an end. Thus the totally "good" news the Danaids receive in the passage under discussion is necessarily modified within the same scene by the arrival of the Aegyptii. In Pers. the Messenger's news of disaster and death is markedly modified by the news that Xerxes is still alive. This essentially binary mode of development, first isolated by Bremond, is an important structural component of all narrative. Tragic structure often highlights the binary process clearly: for example Sep. with its two-fold outcome (city saved and brothers mutually slain): neither of these can of themselves lead to a further plot development.
The terms of Oedipus' curse are less clearly expressed but in their emphasis on the brothers' dividing their patrimony they also associate the family with Thebes.

However, from the terrified entry of the chorus at 78 to the pairing of the sixth warrior completed at 630, the only concern of the play is the safety of the city. By a subterfuge which seems typically Aeschylean, the overt focus is kept exclusively on (1) so that (2) can erupt, volcano-like, in a great moment of anagnorisis. After this, the second stasimon calls on all the PPDC elements of the trilogy, which then remain available for closure. A lengthy messenger speech would disrupt this complex manoeuvre, achieved by no small use of delay and deceit, and would only detract from the highly dramatic shaping of the narrative material.

Hutchinson finds Aeschylus' brevity with the messenger speech a "remarkable treatment". This is because he assumes that it is a norm of Greek tragedy "to relate with considerable fulness decisive events which occur off-stage" (173), rather as if it were somehow obligatory for the playwright to include a major message narrative, or as if he had no other resources at his disposal to convey offstage events. While it is true that Sophocles and even more so Euripides do usually compose a major message narrative for each play, we have already shown that the "classic messenger speech" is not at all typical of Aeschylus.

The Sep. report is brief for many reasons which only become clear if the message is seen as part of the narrative flow. First of all, the Shield scene has already given us much detail of the armour and bearing of the champions on both sides. It is arguably redundant to have details of this again. Then, beginning from the moment of Eteocles' Abbruch at 653, the trilogy has already reached its emotional and revelatory climax and started to move towards closure. When Eteocles left the stage at 719 it represented his exit to death, and the chorus ceased all thoughts of dissuasion.

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123 See 711, 727-741, 788-90.
124 Just before the chorus' entry Eteocles addresses his father's curse and Erinys in a prayer (69ff.), but the burden of the prayer is focused entirely onto the city: μή μοι πόλει γε προμοσθέν πανακληθού/ εκθαμνόστητε... (71-2). See Dawe 1963 38 and Winnington-Ingram 1983, 22, for a discussion of γε.
125 None of this is so. Cf. Euripides' omission of a narrative relating the suicide of Phaedra. We have instead the brief distichomithia between Nurse and Chorus Hipp. 774-89 of which the final line ἕδω γὰρ ὁς νεκρόν νῦν ἔχει (νους δὲ) carries us beyond the fatal circumstances into the aftermath and the arrival of Theseus in the next line. See Barrett's thoughtful remarks on narrative progression pp. 297 and 331-2. The handling of the infanticides in Med. would be another case in point. See p. 25.
126 Of the surviving plays of Sophocles, only Phil. lacks any kind of conventional message narrative, apart from the False Merchant's words at 542-556 and 603-621. For an inventory of messenger speeches in Euripides see de Jong, 1991, Appendix A: no play is without one and IT, Hel. and Bacch. have two while Or. has four.
127 It is interesting to compare the chorus' unsuccessful peitho here with the similar scene at OC 1414 in which Antigone is unable to persuade her brother Polynices to turn back to Argos. Both brothers feel overwhelmed by PPDC elements. In OC
The two brothers are fated to be one in death: the knowledge that they will both die flowers fully in the suggestive lyric preceding the messenger's entry. The two issues are now both in play. The chorus in their second stasimon begin and end with their fear of the kakomantis Erinys of the family. But within the ring, they fear for their city's safety. There are still two mysteriously entwined and paradoxical schemes of knowledge (764-5), linked by terrible suspense and fear.

It is the messenger's job merely to represent the two outcomes as statements of fact. He neatly separates these out: (1) the city is safe (first speech, 792ff.), and (2) Eteocles and Polyneices have killed each other (stichomythia 803-10 and second speech 811-21). In the first speech, critics remark that the "sea of troubles" imagery of 795-6 comes to an end here -- naturally enough, since the theme of the city's safety is now almost completed. Before the second speech, the chorus' excited questions and moment of blank stupefaction before their "recognition" line at 808 (oι γα τάλαινα, μάνας ειμί τῶν κακῶν) seem to indicate that this second piece of news is the more important one. The safety of the city finds its way into the second speech at 815 and 820 but will hardly be used for closure: the play will end not in a paean for the city's safety (as Ant. 100-154), but a lament for the brothers. Where the messenger is at all expansive (820-21) it is not with any eyewitness details but with repetition of the fulfilment-of-curse theme - division by steel and allocation of the earth - and stress on the PPDC elements of the trilogy as a whole. He echoes the language of the preceding ode: Apollo has been κραίνον παλαιάς Λαίου δοσβούλιας (802) where παλαιάς = παλαιγενή (742), and δοσβούλιας = ἀμβούλιαν (750). 821 recalls 736-7, 816-9 recalls 727.

The twin themes of the messenger's report, the double outcome, carry over even into the anapaestic prelude (822-31) to give expression to the binarism we often find in transitional passages such as this: the messenger's τοιαύτα χαίρειν καὶ διαφρύσαμαι πάρα (814) is echoed by the chorus' πότερον χαίρω κάπολολυξο ... ἥ ... κλαύσω; (825ff.) - the hesitation between two topics is also typical of lamentation. As Hutchinson 179 notes, "without dismissing the deliverance of the city too abruptly, Aeschylus is able to separate it from the lyrical section proper."

Antigone spells out fulfilment even more clearly than the chorus do here: ὃρας τὰ τοῦδε δῶν ἁς ἐσ ὡθον ἔκφειρες μαντεύσαμεν (IQ. 1424-5); "Do you see that you are exactly carrying out the oracles?"

Taplin ibid. 168 n.1 gives good references and a discussion on the problem of the text here. See also Hutchinson ad loc.

For a full discussion of the imagery of this play see Cameron, 1971. The word κομπίσματα (794) also looks backwards to the shield scene. Hutchinson points out that κομπ- compounds occur 11 times between 391 and 794.

The chorus could be taken to be referring to the μαντεία they were offering in the preceding ode. Note the absolutely typical use of PPDC language in conjunction with the messenger's news at the moment of understanding.

See e.g. Trach. 947ff.
After this, the safety of the city is taken for granted and the play focuses on establishing a full closing lament for the brothers. In the expression of their lament, the PPDC elements continue to play a part.

Aeschylus arranges it so that the long and rich lyric sequences begun at 720, continue, with minimum interruption from the messenger, to sweep on towards lament and closure. There seem no valid grounds for retaining the entry anapaesths of 861-74 or for extending the play beyond 1004.

4.3.2 Supplices

We saw that the Sep. message largely retained the themes and vocabulary of the odes which surrounded it on either side. The Supp. example is quite different. Set between lavish invocations to Zeus, Danaus' speech describes the democratic procedure by which the people of Argos assent to Pelasgus' proposals. The language refers to assembly procedure and assembly decree. Here then, the worlds of lyric and trimeter contrast strongly - but the name of Zeus, as we shall see, provides an important linking element across the entire section.

The dramatic problem at this early stage of the play centres on the rights and duties of asylum. The chorus of Danaids, reared on an Egyptian model of kingly rule, make passionate and autocratic demands for protection, ending with blackmail. (The Aegyptii's use of the violent Herald to drag the women away later on confirms the savage nature of the Egyptian world.) By contrast, in the figure of Pelasgus and his people, we have a dramatic representation of a different political world; the leader in Argos is a traditional king, but he is also bound by a wide range of responsibilities to his people. There are dangerous tensions in Pelasgus' relationships on both sides: first with the Danaids, so uncompromisingly concerned for themselves, and second between Pelasgus and his people. If Meier's recent interpretation is right, the course of the sequence 340-523 actually depicts "popular rule" coming into being as a response to a new threatening situation which emerges during the process of decision making.

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132 e.g. 833, 840-4.
133 For the authenticity of 861-74 and the final scene 1005-80 see Hutchinson ad loc. and discussion 209-11, also Lloyd-Jones 1959; Brown 1976; Taplin, 1977, 180ff., Dawe 1978, 87ff.
134 See Ehrenberg 515-48 and Meier 84-97.
135 See 250ff. for his ancestry.
136 Cf. the people are φοιλαίτως, 485; they do not like long speeches, 273; they do not like war, 356-8; they might censure Pelasgus 399-401.
137 Ehrenberg's view (see 518-9) is rather that Aeschylus displays a form of democratic government as an essential background.
The Danaids find the king's refusal to decide for himself mere weakness and vacillation: by contrast the Athenian audience perhaps identified strongly with the insoluble problem that both he and his people are forced to face. The rest of the trilogy seems to have shown how much this decision cost Pelasgus and the Argives: the critical nature of the decision provides excellent motivation for a typical Aeschylean strategy of delay. Danaus tries to avoid making a decision at all: the people must decide (365ff.). The chorus reply with a fascinating use of language in which the heroic world of the play absorbs without a pointedly anachronistic effect something of the language of Athenian democratic institutions; they re-assert the king's personal authority (370-5), plunging him into perplexity and fear (379-80). They block any recourse to Egyptian law which would provide a way out for Argos. At the end of his period of προντις οφθηρία, he sees ruin -- but prefers not to face it (453-4). Only when suicide and consequent pollution is threatened does he force himself to make the decision: in the end it is fear of Zeus, "the highest fear of all", which tips the balance (478-9).

The king has been persuaded, but the Danaids will not be sure of protection until persuasion has been successfully exercised on the people in the town: the episode ends with vivid instructions to that effect (480-503), heightening the sense of expectation. In their lyric 524ff. the Danaids attempt to persuade Zeus to be on their side.

Were it not for Pelasgus' resort to his off-stage demos, a message narrative would not be required at all; Pelasgus could vacillate but be finally convinced by the Danaids' suicide threat within the space of a single scene. We may be right to suspect that Supp. is plotted with a message narrative at this point because of the opportunities it offers for displays of choral virtuosity on either side. Aeschylus is manifestly more interested in providing lyric for his choral maidens than in giving Danaus a lengthy speech. He is clearly concerned to make full use of his ardent protagonist-chorus, girls "by turns pathetic, sinister, docile, pertinacious, hysterical, euphoric."

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See Easterling 1985, 1-10.

'Easterling ibid. 2.

'His compositional tendency here and in Sep. might be in the opposite direction to the situation described 30ff., in which a major function of the preceding choral ode was to build towards the explosion of "outcome" in the following message narrative.

'Friis Johansen and Whittle vol.1, 39.
However, other and conflicting questions need to be considered about the narrative strategy. If there is really a dilemma, why is the vote unanimous? Why not describe the course of an exciting debate, as at E. O:. 852-956? Alternatively, why does not Aeschylus, who seems to have invested heavily in lyric and supplementary choruses in this play, make a subsidiary chorus out of the *demos* too, and show the entire debate as an onstage *agon* as he does in *Eum.*? This would accord with the significance normally attributed to the *demos* later in the trilogy.

Answers to these hypothetical questions may tentatively be developed by considering the narrative dynamics although, lacking any PPDC elements, it is hard to find a definite narrative direction for *Supp.* without resorting to external sources. Aeschylus appears to be typically establishing atmosphere and rich background before moving on to action which is truly critical for the Danaids. It seems a very deliberate part of the narrative strategy that Zeus should be repeatedly invoked (and indeed threatened) for assistance in a morally tangled situation which prismatically reflects the god's equally tangled relationship with their ancestress Io. Zeus' silence in the play is profound and entirely unbroken: we have no clue as to his intentions.

The action up to the democratic grant of asylum is only a preliminary in this play: our interest in the treatment of democratic process should not blind us to the fact that

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143This is a similar situation in several ways, and it is also set in Argos: Orestes begs Menelaus for help, but Menelaus declares he will only act via the assembly. The messenger describes four different speeches and their reception.

144Percentage of lyric in descending order: *Supp.* 60%, *Pers.* 50%, Ag. 48%, *Sen., Cho., Eum.* 40%, *Ph* 30%. *Supp.* also makes extensive use of lyric dialogue and epirrhematic composition (348f., 734, 825, 1018f.). See Garvie 1969. For an extended discussion with further references on the problems of the supplementary choruses in this play see Friis Johansen and Whittle 1018-73, and Garvie 192-8. To summarise their views: Garvie believes it is theoretically possible to see three choruses with their respective archontes: the Danaids led by Danaus; the Egyptians led by the Herald; the Argives led by Pelasgus. Whether in fact the Herald was unaccompanied cannot be decided (193-4). The presence of a separate chorus of Handmaidens, sometimes assumed as a fact from 977 and 1023, must be left open too. However, if they consist merely of half the Danaid chorus, we must explain why they should suddenly come to recognise the claims of Aphrodite. FJ&W conclude contra Taplin, 1977, 217, that the presence of "a plurality of Egyptians" is likely. On the exodus, these authors agree that it is divided between two parties, and discuss who these might be. There is no preparation for a split between the Danaids themselves, and Hypermemn is an isolated figure later on; semi-choruses, then, are unlikely. The alternatives in their view are Handmaidens or Danaus' Argive bodyguard. See also M. McCall, "The Secondary choruses in Aeschylus' *Supplices*," *Cal. Studies, in Class. Ant.* 9, 1976, 117-31.

145The protecting *demos* of Argos is strongly emphasised later in this play (see esp. 942-9 and 980-8). It is possible that they comprise the non-Danaid element of the exodos, speaking on behalf of Aphrodite (see note 25). They would be significant to the action "if either Danaus or his daughters were (there) somehow called to account either for a military defeat suffered by the Argives, or for the murder of the Aegyptii, or for both." (FJ&W, 41-2; see also Winnington-Ingram JHS 81 (1961) 148-9.

146See p.54 n.57 for references on the reconstruction of the trilogy.

147Garvie 70ff. notes the rare allegorical use of myth to provide a motif: we find themes of breath/wind/storm and thematic oppositions such as male/female, touch/seizure. These however are not presented in a clear, predictive way.

148Easterling points to 88-90: Αἰὸς ᾿Αμορος ὅς χαῖδρος ἐπάθη- δεικοὶ γὰρ πραξίδων δάκηλοι τε τείνουσιν πόροι κατειδὲν ἐφοροτοι.
to the average audience member the most dramatic agon is probably not that between Pelasgus and Danaids, individual and chorus, but between the two violently opposed choruses of Danaids and Egyptians – if so, a typical manipulation in favour of choral lyric. This is the specific encounter that has been imminent from the opening anapaests of the play. The presentation of a major debate of the Argive people in the interim would clog the developing action; we have already seen Pelasgus and the Danaids debate the issues. Much redundancy would result from repetition.

It might be that the third play showed an agon between Danaids and Argive people, perhaps making a resonant ending for the whole trilogy as it does in Eum. If the demos is going to be important later, sufficient preparation for their future appearance has by now been made.

Danaus’ speech 605-24 has been very fully analysed by Friis Johansen and Whittle who note its “almost perfect symmetry.” They show how the decree’s tripartite structure resembles genuine official decrees. Their analysis of the “democratic” vocabulary indicates that Aeschylus is careful not to evoke a contemporary fifth-century context too sharply; most of the vocabulary is non-technical and not specific to Athenian processes of law while reminiscent of it.

The opening statement of Danaus’ speech interestingly falls short of the usual news headline: he merely tells the chorus that a decision has been reached (ôéôôoiçet, 601) rather than saying what the decision was. The lack of explicitness prompts the questions of the chorus (τιοι, 603, 604) and the two utterances of 602 and 603 with their phatic function, perhaps a rather obvious attempt to “up the ante” for his account. (We might compare this raising of the temperature with the stichomythic section of Sep. 803-10.)

149 If in fact the Herald enters with a troop of Egyptians (who may or may not be representing the sons of Aegyptus): we cannot be certain.

150 But see Garvie 204-11 for the problems of reconstructing Danaids, the third play.

151 It might well be: from the outset Supp. makes use of the language of polis religion and polis constitution. See Ehrenberg 518ff.

152 To summarise their excellent analysis briefly, the account divides into 2 sections (like the Sep. speech), 605-14 and 615-24, which break down into 4 sections, arranged ring fashion: (1) 605-8 introduction in 4 lines of 2+2, (2) 609-14 summary of decree in 6 lines, (3) 615-20 summary of Pelasgus’ speech in 6 lines, (4) 621-4 conclusion in 4 lines of 2+2. The severely symmetrical arrangement is underlined with very many verbal echoes within and across the sections. The accusative and infinitive construction of 609-614 is matched by a similar construction 615-20. Like a newspaper report, the first of these is the most important part - the wording of the decree - while the second gives the words of Pelasgus to his people which led up to the decree.

153 (1) essential part, ἡμᾶς μεταξὺ τῆς ἀδικίας (2) various specifications (3) statement of penalty.

154 See Easterling op. cit. for the dramatic poets’ careful evocation of the heroic world and lack of obvious metatheatrical vocabulary.
There is a little characterisation on either side: the Danaids address their father warmly with ὁ χαίρε πρέσβει (602) and Danaus says the news makes him feel young at heart (606). ὁ διχορρόπους (605) points to the binary nature of narrative and the messenger’s role in furthering the narrative structure by his report. All the same, the unanimity of their agreement, much as it usefully contributes to the brevity of Danaus’ speech, also has very real point.

Aeschylus seems to represent an idealised world in which a democratic people unanimously take the right advice and make the morally correct decision, whatever the cost to themselves. There seems real point in describing the show of hands, a democratic procedure as unknown to the world of epic as to Aeschylus’ imagined Egypt: in the brief messenger speech Aeschylus has Danaus linger on a moment when the mass of Argive people began to be individually accountable for their own futures, by ballot or show of hands. 605-8 stress the joyful excitement when the air bristled with upstretched right hands.

The single, but strong and highly important thematic thread connecting the lyric-message-lyric sequence is the name of Zeus, and the power of Zeus. The first lyric (524-99) began with an elaborate invocation (524-35) and the final four stanzas returned to him. The intervening narrative of Io’s wanderings culminated in her arrival at Egypt described as “the fertile grove of Zeus” (558). The penultimate strophe ends emphatically on the word Zeus, and in the final strophe the corrupt text appears to see him sitting in judgement, his action as the ultimate decision-maker mirroring the earthly decision process of the Pelasgians (very closely, if Auratus’ βούλιος at 599 is right).

Then in Danaus’ narrative, Zeus’ name appears twice: both times in key ways and in strategic proximity to both Pelasgus and his people (ἐν ξυπερήπει πελασγῶν, ἱκέσιου Ζήνος... 616, and δήμος Πελασγῶν, Ζεῦς... 624). Pelasgus may have used “every subtle and persuasive turn of the orator’s art” (Vellacott’s translation of 623), but the resonant ending of the speech points to the highest authority of all: Ζεῦς δ’ ἐπέκρανεν τέλος.

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155 The word is used again in the context of voting at Ἀγ. 815 (where the gods cast ὁ διχορρόπους ψήφους): voting procedure is a natural point at which a binary choice is produced and message narratives of decision-making processes are not uncommon.

156 See Ehrenberg 520ff: in Athens voting by χειροτονία or pebbles probably goes back to the time of Solon.
The chorus immediately sing of Zeus again, the third lyric in which they do so. This time however, they are not praying for themselves nor for Pelasgus, but invoking blessings for the people of Argos and the city (625, 698).

In this ode Zeus is invoked in new contexts which honour the community and its requirements and obligations; earlier lyrics more narrowly demanded his protection as their ancestor. Here Zeus is friend of strangers (627, 672), friend of suppliants (641, 652), parent of gods (631), effector of events (646), object of elders' worship (671-2), promoter of fertility (689-90). The language of song and dance at 694-7 (see also 681) reflects back onto the performers. Also, the Danaids have learnt a lesson in politics.

The successful outcome of the attempt to get asylum will immediately be challenged by the news of the Aegyptii's arrival, and at the end of this first play the outcome of this more serious conflict remains unclear. The lyric-message-lyric sequence has underlined the omnipotence of Zeus in determining every event, but only heightened the hermeneutic problem of understanding how he is disposed to resolve this trilogy.
SECTION THREE: NARRATIVE DOLOS IN SOPHOCLES

LSJ: δόλος, ὁ, prop. bait for fish. Od. 12.252: hence, any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching, as the net in which Hephaestus catches Ares, 8.276; the Trojan horse, ib.494; Ixion's bride, Pi.P.2.39; the robe of Penelope, Od.19.137 (pl.) ... b. generally, any trick or stratagem, πυκνον δ. ἄλλον ὑφαίνε II.6.187,etc.: in pl., wiles, δόλοι καὶ μήδεα 3.202; δόλοι κεκασμένε 4.339, etc. 2. in the abstract, craft, cunning, treachery, δόλο ἥε βίηφι Od.9.406; ἐπεφεν δόλῳ, οὗ τι κράτει γε II.7.142; οὗ κατ' ἱσχύν..δόλῳ δέ..A. Pr. 215, cf. Ch. 556, etc.; δόλοις ib.888, S.O.T 960, etc.; ἐκ δόλου Id.El. 279; ἐν δόλῳ Id.Ph. 102; σὺν δόλῳ A.Pers.775....

In this section I consider some of Sophocles' narrative strategies under the broad heading of dolos. In fact, Aeschylus' bold delays, deceits and ambiguities could also have been considered in this category, but I have reserved dolos as particularly appropriate for the subtle and extraordinarily innovative narrative manipulations to be encountered in Sophocles' work.

Dolos plays a large part in many texts preceding Sophocles'. The Odyssey, for example, is a cunning and self-reflexive poem whose polytropos hero famously defines himself in terms of dolos.1 His trick-filled escapes, disguises, artful narratives and elaborately-delayed ultimate recognition are the very substance of the poem,2 especially the second half with its, four cumulative lying narrative sequences.3 Chapter 6 on narrative "loops" will implicitly demonstrate the influence on Sophocles of these richly ironic and psychologically engrossing narrative sequences. This is an area in which Sophocles is Homerikotatos. Then among other

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1Od. 9.19-20: εἴμα Ὀδυσσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, δς πάοι δόλοις ἀνθρώποις μέλα, καὶ μεν κλέος σύρρακν ἕκει.
2Even the design of the poem seems affected by the indirect and deceptive methods of the hero. Its structure is more complex and intricate than that of the Iliad. Not only do we begin in medias res, but much of the hero's experience is related in a retrospective narrative recounted by himself (books 9-12), and the poem contains many other tales with a tale, told by Odysseus and others ... The poet also, like his hero, delays events, prolongs the suspense, and even defers the actual introduction of his hero for four books ... The poet also seems occasionally to deceive or misdirect his audience, leading them to expect a development which he then frustrates. This literary sophistication is paralleled in the self-consciousness of the poet concerning his own poetic creation and the deceptive power of poetry in general. Poets (Phemius and Demodocus) figure in the cast of characters, as they did not in the Iliad. Odysseus himself is more than once compared to a poet (19.203), particularly when he is telling his supremely persuasive lies, which regularly include substantial elements of truth" (Rutherford, 1992, 7). For some recent discussion see Murnaghan 1987; Peradotto 1990; Goldhill 1991 pp.1-68.
texts, Hesiod's *Theogony* shows *dolos* to be a cosmogonic principle of the universe, first when the gods themselves are generated. Later, through Prometheus and Pandora (cf. *Works and Days* 47-105) *dolos* becomes a principle to be thought of as operating in all subsequent relationships - no less between gods and men than between men and women. In the *Oresteia*, the *dolos*-filled world of the first two plays recedes in the third. Sophocles' plays make a more ambiguous movement.

Detienne and Vernant's study of *metis* uncovered a significant semantic field consisting of the key nouns and adjectives δόλος, μηχανή, τέχνη, ἄπατη, αἰθολος, ποικίλος, αἰμύλος.⁴ *Metis* (and associated *dolos*) encompasses "the whole extent of the cultural world of the Greeks from its most ancient technical traditions to the structure of its pantheon."⁵ It is applied to a whole variety of situations which are "transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous",⁶ and it operates between two opposite poles with objects "that are not yet stable."⁷

This description of the operation of *metis* could not provide a better model for the way any creative poet, then or now, operates with his flexible narrative material, giving and withholding information and continuously engaging his audience by means of a stream of suspense-sustaining narrative devices. The whole area of narrative strategy and the phenomenology of the reading/audience process is at issue here. *Dolos* functions as the bait, that which plays on the perception of the prey, constructing and sustaining a fictional reality in order to keep it "on the hook."

CHAPTER 5: NARRATIVE THEORIES, *DOLOS* AND SOPHOCLES

5.1 *Dolos* and narrative theories: Greimas' veridictory square

In fictional communication some measure of deceit or at least ambiguity will always be present. Different theorists have different ways of expressing this idea; from a structuralist point of view there is an inherent trickiness in the narrative process itself: "the mainspring of the narrative activity is to be traced to that very confusion between consequitiveness and consequence, what-comes-*after* being read in a narrative as what-is-*caused* by. Narrative would then be a systematic application of

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⁴Detienne and Vernant 43
⁵*ibid.* p. 2.
⁶*ibid.* p. 3
⁷*ibid.* p. 5
the logical fallacy denounced by scholasticism under the formula, *post hoc ergo propter hoc.*

As regards the narrator-narratee axis, deceit must be present to maintain the relationship between narrator and narratee throughout the course of the narrative. At any moment the narratee can put an end to the narrative transaction, withdrawing his attention out of sheer lack of interest or because he has prematurely gained all the information inherent in the communication. The flow of information must be manipulated continuously so as to maintain the audience's interest, directing them towards full recognition without including all the data to complete the process until the end, if at all. Enough information must be given to provoke speculation, but not too much. Withholding and hiding information, setting up false expectations, controlling the reader's response not only by the creation of frames but, more subtly, by leaving *gaps,* ambiguities or unresolved contradictions, is absolutely the way of all narratives.

There are different models here. To Barthes, narratives are "legal tender, subject to contract, economic stakes, in short, *merchandise...* narrative is both product and production, merchandise and commerce, a stake and the bearer of that stake... ." This model finds some measure of immediate confirmation in ancient drama where the messenger might expect *χάρπις* in return for his information: in Trach. and Phil. Sophocles draws attention to the messenger's information as a narrative transaction contained within a much larger piece of "trading" or "transaction" that is taking place.

Chambers' model is slightly different, emphasising a power structure: "To tell a story is to exercise power (it is even called the power of narration), and "authorship" is cognate with "authority." But the authority is not absolute but relational, the result of an act of authorisation on the part of those subject to the power, and hence something to be *earned.* (my italics)

Etymologically the narrator is the one who knows (Latin *narrare,* *gnarare,* related to *gnarus.* knowing, skilled), and in Chambers' view, "where the narratee offers
attention in exchange for information, the narrator sacrifices the information for some form of attention.

From another point of view, narration can be viewed as a seductive act, a kind of strip-tease in which an unrestricted view is deliberately and tantalisingly denied. All these different narrative models, which of course derive from the real world, perhaps unsurprisingly are often thematised within the narrative as well.

I find useful the model of narrative as a kind of game: fiction is essentially ludic, and works by continuous interplay of illusion, allusion, elusion, collusion, delusion, and so forth. Tragedies are of course also known as plays, and plays, with their concrete, three-dimensional falsehoods, disguise and dressing-up, most obviously and most profoundly exemplify the ludic. When this is thematised by plots involving overt deceit, a whole complex of effects can be created in which discrepant awareness is always significant. Rich effects can be created, dependant on an interplay of engrossment and detachment, and the play may draw attention to its own theatrical status, reminding us that it is second-by-second constructing a reality rather than constituting one. We are both drawn in and kept out; the design of the play is exposed and so is our response to it.

*Greimas: the veridictory square*

In Aristotelian plot terms, ludic elements of deceit, disguise and dissimulation are merely those preliminary conditions (hardly considered by Aristotle) which give way to reversals and recognition, elements which Aristotle considered to be "tragedy's greatest means of emotional power" (Halliwell's translation). In the plots of both comedy and tragedy, we see a rich and continuous interplay between the need for knowledge, and doloi which frustrate the need. In this way, as I have noted already, plots often thematise the basic narrator - narratee situation by highlighting the struggle to get certain information and achieve an understanding of what is going on.

In their highly significant article, which in many ways develops Aristotle's views on plot, Greimas and Courtés locate four positions which between them cover the entire
range of cognitive possibilities in narrative. These are interesting because they
demonstrate how much more profoundly than in Aristotle's view the narrative
process is steeped in deception. When deception stops, the narrative is over. The
four basic positions are:

1. True (= being + appearing)
2. False (= not being + not appearing)
3. Secret (= being + not appearing)
4. Delusion/lie (= not being + appearing).

The relationship between these positions can be expressed diagrammatically in the
figure known as the veridictory square, a schema which can be applied without
modification to many complex recognition sequences, such as those in S. E. E. Hel.,
IT. Ion: the desired husband/brother/son is first absent (position 3); then a report of
some kind implies that he is not only absent but also dead (position 2); in fact the
hero is alive and present, but disguised in some way (position 4); then full
recognition (often delayed by the success of the previous dissimulation) finally takes
place (position 1).

The schema can also be used to describe the large movement from ignorance to
knowledge, from deceit to anagnorisis, which provides the major outline of some
tragedies. The movement from one position to the next around the veridictory square
releases a transformative power, which seems to be another way of saying "brings
about a reversal and either a new phase of the story or closure."

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18 Veridictory square (adapted from Greimas and Courtés 1989, 571):

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEING</th>
<th>APPEARING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 TRUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 SECRET</td>
<td>4 DELUSION</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOT APPEARING</td>
<td>NOT BEING</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 FALSE</td>
<td></td>
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19 The authors write of Oedipus 1989 570: "The first part of his life is spent in ignorance (le non-savoir) the second part in
knowledge about himself ... The passage from one part to another corresponds to a transformation on the level of knowledge
(of the subject about himself) which puts the narrative off balance and triggers a new narrative sequence... there can come a
moment of recognition when certain but erroneous knowledge gives way to another knowledge (perhaps "true", but it maybe in
highly complex narrative, that it is only a movement to another kind of false knowledge.) ...This transformational power of
narrative, usually marking the climax, is the most intense and satisfying moment as far as the audience is concerned." One
might produce a reading of the ending of Cho. along these lines.

20 The verb "transform" and phrase "transformational rule" are discussed in Prince, 1987.
5.2 Dolos and Greimas' actantial theory

Actantial theory is a way of isolating fundamental roles at the deep structure level of narrative, and the reason for its introduction here is to stress the vast opportunities for doloi in the relationships between actants in tragedy. Actantial theory was developed by Greimas from the earlier work of Propp and Souriau. His theory of the micro-universe is an inherently dramatic one which lends itself extremely well to narrative studies of tragedy.

All figures at the deep structure level belong to six actantial classes. Greimas' model allows one to include not only the *dramatis personae* who appear on the stage but more abstract entities such as gods, Necessity, Fate etc., if justified by their functional role in the text. The actants may be divided into three pairs, and since actantial theory (like most narrative theory) has a linguistic underpinning, the relationship between each pair should have the capacity of being verbally expressed as subject - predicate - object, to constitute a sentence of the *fabula*.

1. subject/object
   Subject is often (but not always) the protagonist(s) of the narrative surface structure, typified by his teleological wish or fear directed towards the object. A modulation of power is envisaged.

2. destinateur/destinataire: sender/receiver or power/receiver
   Forces of various kinds, human and non-human, may bring about or thwart hopes and fears. An abstraction legitimated by an analysis of the paradigmatic elements of the text may be designated "power". Power communicates object to receiver, and the

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21Propp's actants are: 1. The villain. 2. The donor (provider.) 3. The helper. 4. The sought-for person (and her father. 5. The dispatcher. 6. The hero. 7. The false hero.

22Souriau's actants: 1. Lion.....the orientated thematic Force. 2. Sun.....the Representative of the wished-for Good, of the orienting Value. 3. Earth....virtual Recipient of that Good (that for which the Lion is working). 4. Mars.....the Opponent. 5. Libra....the Arbiter, attributor of the Good. 6. Moon.....the Rescue, the doubling of one of the preceding forces.

23A microuniverse is a discrete unit of any part of the semantic universe. It may be technological, legal, literary etc.. However, "the semantic microuniverse can be defined as a universe, that is to say, as a signifying whole (tout de signification), only to the extent that it can surge up at any moment before us as a simple drama, as an actantial structure." (Greimas 1983, 199). Further, "utterance is a drama (spectacle). In traditional syntax, functions are only roles played by words - the subject is "somebody who does the action," the object "somebody who undergoes the action," and so forth - a proposition, in such a conception, is only a drama which *homo loquens* produces for himself." (ibid., 198)

24The exact force of *destinateur/destinataire* is not easy to render: *destinataire* corresponds to the English word "addressee" (as on a parcel), but *destinateur* is not to be found in a standard French dictionary. It presumably corresponds both to the postal idea of "addressee," the one who sends the communication as well as the notion of "fate", "will", from its association with the verb *destiner* (à), "to intend (for)", and the noun *la destination*, "purpose" as well as "destination."
relationship between the two this time is aetiological, showing a modulation of knowledge.

3. helper/opponent
These less central actants are modifiers and may be regarded by analogy with sentence structure as having an adverbial function in relation to the other four ("notwithstanding," "owing to"). They represent the circumstances under which the enterprise may or may not be fulfilled.

Prince gives an actantial model for Madame Bovary: subject - Emma; object - happiness; sender - romantic literature; receiver - Emma; helper - Léon, Rodolphe; opponent - Charles, Yonville, Rodolphe, Homais, Lheureux.

The very process of attempting to find a satisfactory actantial structure for individual tragedies is interesting: in confronting the various possibilities and ambiguities which emerge during reading, we are no doubt experiencing the tricky interplay between narrator and narratee typical of all texts.

One actor at the surface level can function as two actants at the deep level. This does not necessarily create complexity: in Propp's folk-tale schema, receiver is always identical with subject, and power with object,25 (cf. a simple love story: John (subject) wants to marry (function) Mary. Mary (power) is prepared to marry (function) John (receiver). However, the actantial structure of Greek tragedy has wider reference: just as power is likely to be a god or gods so too the final receiver of the object is society itself, or its representative group of individuals within the micro-universe of the play (e.g. the people of Thebes).

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25The following table compares the three sets of categories. Note the doubling up of Propp's category "hero" as both subject and receiver in Greimas' scheme. Likewise "the sought-for person and her father" appear as both object and power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greimas</th>
<th>Propp</th>
<th>Souriau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>Force/Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>the sought-for person and her father</td>
<td>Rep. of wished-for Good/Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>the sought-for person and her father</td>
<td>Arbiter, attributor of the Good/Libra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dispatcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiver</td>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>virtual Recipient of the Good/Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>Helper &amp; Donor</td>
<td>Rescue/Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent</td>
<td>Villain</td>
<td>Opponent/Mars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Actantial theory: Aeschylus and Sophocles

Dolos is inherent in any micro-universe, and forms much of the irony and suspense of both comedy and tragedy. From the point of view of subject in a tragedy, the full extent of the micro-universe of the play cannot fully be known. Subject experiences misprisions, ambiguities and deceits. In the opening scenes of many plays we see his/her initial aim towards object modified by scenes of help or opposition. Meanwhile, in an oblique and usually disguised relationship to subject, power also makes a movement towards object: the audience at any rate begins to understand that object is both object of desire and object of communication between power and receiver. Given the unfinished teleological relationship between subject and object at the outset and the separate, disguised movement of power, an outcome will occur which is almost by definition not predictable by subject at the outset (even though in tragedy, with its heavily marked ironies, it may well have been overtly predicted). By the end, two distinct but connected events have occurred: the subject/object relationship has reached a telos, and object has been communicated to receiver.

Aeschylus and Sophocles typically produce great effects by creating a surface structure which heavily disguises the actantial structure at the deep level: in Sep. the opening structure appears to be Eteocles (subject) confronting Polyneices (object). The two brothers, one attacking and the other defending Thebes, appear to be at opposite poles. In fact, however, the two brothers become one actant, object of a stronger power than either of them had perceived. Somewhat similarly in OT, it initially appears that Oedipus is the subject searching for (function) the murderer of his father (object). But again, the moment of recognition reveals these two apparently separate actants to be one identical figure.

In both these plays, the figure who initially appears to be subject is shown to be the victim of ignorance. Bacchae, however, is different. Dionysus is consistently both subject and power throughout. He is in control of everything that happens in the drama and indeed he foretells it in outline to the audience in the prologue. In this case object (Pentheus) is the ignorant party, and raw divine actantial power overtly disguises itself into the actantial subject, a youth whose effeminacy seems to be the reverse of divine power, just as it is also the reverse of Pentheus' military strength. Dionysus disguises himself (and his victim) in order to destroy him. Building on two of Dionysus' traditional aspects, Euripides' stage figure is in fact two separate actants. Pentheus is crushed between the two. 26

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26The remaining fragments of Aeschylus' Lycurgus tetralogy seem to confirm that Dionysus had the same double actantial
Chapter 5

The kind of dolos we see operating in Sep., OT and Bacchae alike has the capacity to make identities shift disconcertingly from one pole to their opposite, revealing a dangerous instability in items of knowledge that seemed previously certain.

It seems possible to define a fixed actantial structure which would cover all Aeschylus' surviving plays. The structure would not necessarily apply to opening or middle plays of trilogies but would always be apparent on closure. In this structure the gods, particularly Zeus, are power, while the community has two actantial roles - subject and receiver (cf. Sep., Ag., Eum., Pers.). The Oresteia both opens and closes with plays in which the community functions like this.27

The double actantial role of the community is shown at its simplest in Pers.: the chorus hope and fear for Xerxes' success at the outset (Xerxes is object), and lament his losses at the end. It is interesting that this doubling-up of subject and receiver in one identity is the folk-tale pattern Propp described, except that there the actants coincide in an individual (The Hero), not a community. Perhaps we are looking at a necessary shift made by Aeschylus or his predecessors to adapt myth/folk tale to the quite different ideological and sociological context of tragedy.

In Aeschylus' completed narratives, an evil past has invariably given way to some better civic present in which gods are no longer a threat to the community. The τέλος of each surviving trilogy and of Pers. is manifested by group ritual, in the case of Oresteia a procession, in the case of Pers. and Sep. a lament.28 The concluding tone is comparatively positive, even if the community laments, since what has been

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27The adaptation required by Aeschylus to make the community the subject of Ag, rather than Aegisthus (cf. Od. 4, 514-25), is particularly striking. Aegisthus is the traditional protagonist of the revenge plot but Aeschylus makes him so insignificant that his appearance can wait until the closing minutes of the play. No equivalent displacement has taken place in Cho., where Orestes is both protagonist and actantial subject. In Ag, a double displacement has occurred: it might at the outset seem that Clytemnestra has taken over Aegisthus' actantial role (Homer's account had already been modified by variants composed by Hesiod, Hagi, Xanthus and Stesichorus and no doubt other lyric poets giving a bigger role in the murder to Clytemnestra), but in fact it is clear that it is the chorus who function as subject: in their enormous singing role they express the hopes and fears which fulfil the basic teleological conditions required of subject, while all the information delivered in the episodes "breaks onto" them. Like Oedipus in OT, the very limits of cognitive competence involve the audience most intensely and which provide much of the irony in the play.

28Cho., Supp and PB. are not to be taken as examples of this rule since they are first or middle plays of trilogies: perhaps Aeschylus' concern for the community in the Danaid trilogy overall can be assumed by the extensive treatment of Pelasgus' consultation with the Argive assembly (Supp. 365-709). On many projections, these Pelasgian Argives would have constituted an on-stage chorus at the end of the trilogy.
demonstrated is the working out of some "process" which is also "progress." The tragic fate of individual characters in the play is subsumed under the demonstration of group continuing security in the form of ritual performance. With this the audience no doubt identified, feeling themselves strengthened and made secure by what they witnessed. In Pers. the identification with the ritual is clearly more complex, but the presence of lamenting Persians nonetheless confirm the fact that Athenians need not fear for their city.

Part of the richness of the Oresteia lies in its strategic manipulation of the audience's perception of power across the three plays of the trilogy: initially Zeus is described as the sole exception to the rule of flux. He is beyond comparison (Ag. 163-5) and in total control (παναιτίου, πανεργήτεα). The idea is floated that he has initiated a plan for mortals to learn through (generational) suffering (cf. also 1563-4); but not only does the oxymoron χάρις βίανος (182) highlight the paradoxical nature of this idea, Zeus himself is only part of a generally puzzling kaleidoscope of confusing and inconsistently-linked deities operating in the universe (upported, α.'τελείως Ἡ τίς Ἀπόλλων Ἡ Πᾶν Ἡ Ζεῦς, 55-6). By the end of Cho. this confusion has become critical. Sub-elements of power conflict and no sense can be made of the whole, or of Zeus' role. At last in Eum. the divine structure is clarified by the creation of a strict hierarchy and a defined separation of function between the divinities who constitute actantial power. Without minimising the importance of the trial, Orestes' matricide, an agonising dilemma in Cho., has small significance from the perspective of this conclusion. By this time, none of the actants are individualised humans (or indeed human at all) apart from the members of the procession.

Proposed actantial structure of Eum: subject - Apollo and Athena; object - Furies; power - Zeus; receiver - Athens (represented by the participants in the final procession - see Sommerstein p. 278); helpers - legal system, logos and peitho; opponents - Clytemnestra's ghost.

Sophocles

In Aeschylus' work, doloi occupy a merely interim position in the overall narrative structure. No dolos remains at the end to reduce the strong finality of closure.29

29I would not wish to over-generalise: at the end of Eum. of course the Erinyes retain enormous power and the future can only be expressed in terms of prayers and hopes.
Sophocles' dramatic world tends to be differently constructed and *doloi* persist unresolved beyond the end of the play.

In Sophocles' plays, the same actantial framework where power = gods and subject and receiver = the community is still nominally in place, but it comes under pressure in all kinds of ways, subjected to Sophocles' tremendous and incessant irony and his extraordinary interest in the portrayal of "social psychology," as one might describe his portrayal of humans reacting and relating to their social environment. Actantial categories and the relationships between them undergo a different, more subtle kind of shift in comparison with that required for their original conversion from myth to tragedy in the first place.\(^9\)

Sophoclean gods still deliver a traditional, mythical object\(^11\) to the community, but there is often little sense that they are involved in the creation of a positive process. We find nothing like the idea of consistent interest in earthly affairs.\(^32\) The focus is on the suffering individual rather than the community which benefits from their suffering. In comparison with Aeschylean endings, it is striking that the satisfactory burial of *Ajax* seems to be achieved without the aid of Athena, who opened the prologue, and that while Heracles' appearance at the end of *Phil.* ironically wrenches the action back onto its destined track, his action mirrors Athena's in the earlier play in its total lack of concern for human suffering and justice, now or in the future.

Sophocles' plays tend to break off abruptly, usually adumbrating but not including the closing community ritual which seems to be Aeschylus' typical practice. (The exceptions here are *Phil.* where no immediate ritual is to take place - though there will be healing in Troy - and *OC.*, which uniquely *does* end in a lament). The sense of communal benefit (object communicated to receiver) is certainly implicitly present in

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\(^9\)The folk-tale patterns taken up by lyric and dramatic poets have their own "inevitability" or "shaping": there are repeated motifs of mistaken identity, dangers to be overcome, exposed children to be found. Some of these motifs cannot be deleted or avoided, and Aristotle suggests limits here: τοὺς μὲν οὖν παρελθμένους μύθους λύειν οὐκ ἔστει, λέγω δὲ οὖν τὴν Κλειταμνήστραν ἀποθανόντας ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀρέστου καὶ τῆς Ἐρυφήλην ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀλκμαίανος, αὐτὸν δὲ εὐρύσκειν δὲ καὶ τοῖς παραδεδομένοις χρήσθαι καλῶς. "Now one cannot alter traditional plots (I mean, Clytemnestra's death at Orestes' hands, or Eriphyle at Alcmene's) but the individual poet should find ways of handling even these to good effect." (A.Po. 1453b10: Halliwell's translation). All the same, modifications are inevitable: the medium of tragedy is essentially different from folk tale, exploring moral, religious and personal issues shaped into a dramatic context. At the same time, the regular competitive festival context creates a requirement for innovation, for a renewal of τὸ θεωμάςτον.

\(^11\)The nature of the object to be delivered is tightly restricted by the tragic genre: in *Ajax*, *Trach.* Ant., *El.*, and *OC.*, it is a corpse or corpses requiring (ritual) disposal.

\(^32\)Such as is found perhaps most clearly in *PB.*, which contains the idea that Zeus is paying acute attention to everything that is said onstage. However, the situation of Zeus in this play is of course something of a special case since only here is his authority directly threatened.
the plays which take cult-heroes such as Ajax, Heracles and the Colonean Oedipus as their central figures, but the treatment is very subtle and various.

Sophoclean endings are of extraordinary interest. In the first three surviving plays, all of which close (traditionally enough) with a corpse requiring burial, there seems to be a tendency to stop the play earlier and earlier. The culminating example of this is the later El, which ends with Aegisthus, one of the two traditional corpses, still arguing with his murderer and in perfect mental and physical health.

To take merely the first two plays (according to majority opinion), Ajax and Trach: realistic, immediate details of preparations for the first stage of Ajax' interment (digging the nearby grave, heating water, fetching the arms that will be buried with the body) fill the last speech, and the play closes as brother and son, with assistance, raise the still-bleeding Ajax and the cast process offstage with it. The second stage - the burial itself - is also felt to be imminent - the body, after all, has been lying visible on the ground since its discovery at 891. Ajax will have a full family burial with wife, brother, son and Salaminians in attendance, even if Telamon and Eriboia are absent. Significantly, Odysseus and other Greeks may attend.

In Trach. Heracles, carried in unconscious on a stretcher, gives an initially strong visual impression of a corpse laid out on a bier. But this image is not fulfilled within the course of the play itself. He is still alive at the end and this final scene, we eventually understand, is only a preliminary one which makes arrangements for the subsequent death on Oeta. Trachis itself, setting for the play, turns into a merely transitional place, just a stop on a longer death journey Heracles is making from Zeus' altar at Cape Cenaeum to Zeus' sacred mountain. This ending, while it fills in gaps in our previous understanding (cf.1145) creates very many more which remain partially or completely unresolved to us, if not so much to the original audience.

Oddly, it is Heracles himself who, with apparently no reference to divine command, designates a pyre on Zeus' mountain, and demands to be burned alive by his son. But is this just Heracles' own wish? Surely not. In verses 1145-50 Sophocles delicately tempts us to think that Heracles would have told us more detail of Zeus' last instruction, immolation, is in fact not even expressly stated, since οἶμιξ at 1197 could mean vexpôç, as it always does in Homer. (See LSJ). In that case Hyllus would only be being ordered to carry out quite natural kedea. So without some previous knowledge that this was the way he died, Hyllus' shocked reaction at 1203 would be the first, somewhat confusing indication to the audience of Heracles' intention.

These verses also have the function of neatly disposing of family members who would be extraneous in the closing stages of the play.
commands, including orders for death, if Alcmena and his remaining children could have been formally assembled to listen.\(^{35}\) Since this is not possible (1151-6) Heracles gives Hyllus an abbreviated account of the Dodona oracle before issuing direct orders about the manner of his death, orders which we, if not Hyllus, might suppose to be equally enjoined by Zeus.\(^{36}\)

It is interesting to consider other ways the information about Heracles' death could have been given. As at the end of Phil., a *deus* (some appropriate emissary from Zeus) could have been used, making every detail clear and incontrovertible and commanding instant obedience from Hyllus. What we have instead is a dialogue in which a series of horrifying orders from a brutal man dying in agony are issued to his traumatised, terrified son, from whom he has forced an oath of obedience. It is a portrayal of paternal bullying which is almost unbearable to watch.\(^{37}\) This tone of intense mental and physical pain is maintained right through Hyllus' final speech, and includes the closing lines 1275-8, whoever is the speaker.\(^{38}\) The final expression, "and none of these things is not Zeus" is Aeschylean in its concluding emphasis on the power of Zeus in human affairs, but the speaker has turned the thought on its head and is referring to human *suffering*, not achievement. Any idea that this might not be a final judgment is only hinted at (see previous note), just as details of the ultimate death on Oeta are also kept obscure.

Emotion and dramatic irony counterpoint one another: the orders at which Hyllus shows most distress are those where the audience have the greatest extent of superior information. Hyllus manages to negotiate with Heracles over the pyre: he will see to the building of it but not touch it. There is a narrative gap in which Philoctetes, the man who will light it and receive Heracles' bow in reward is not mentioned: the audience know there is a solution for this dilemma. But the most painful order of all is that Hyllus must marry Iole, and this we know cannot be denied. That the noble Heraclidae were generated with such initial repugnance creates a whole spectrum of possible responses in the audience.

\(^{35}\)We are also entitled to wonder whether Alcmena, who enjoyed Zeus' favour herself, might not have her own divine information to relate.

\(^{36}\)This explanation still does not cope with Hyllus' astonishingly correct understanding of *οὐδὲν* as *living* body. Should we suppose that the immolation story was so familiar to the audience that knowledge of it is naturally imputed to Hyllus as well?

\(^{37}\)Cf. two other extremely powerful and painful father-son scenes in Sophocles - Creon and Haemon in *Ant.* and Oedipus and Polyneices in *OC.* Somewhat different, but nonetheless tinged with enormous emotion, is the relationship between Neoptolemus and his two surrogate father-figures in Phil.

\(^{38}\)Although we might read a little ironic mitigation into 1270, "The future is hidden from us" - it will, after all be a glorious future. Cf. Roberts 1988. Perhaps Heracles' final speech 1259-63, with its adjective *ἐξεγερτὸς* (1262) also lightens the tone.
Trach. is not alone in "gratuitously" reminding us of future events near the end. OT., El., Phil. and OC. do the same. The proleptic references disturb any sense of closing harmony that might be created in the narrative audience. But at the same time they are, paradoxically, indicating closure to the authorial audience, who are reminded that they have been watching this particular story, one among many.39

The rest of this chapter discusses the difficulty of establishing actantial power in what is (probably) Sophocles' earliest surviving play.

5.4 Actantial power in Ajax.

This play opens with a rare Sophoclean display of divine power, more like an Euripidean than a Sophoclean prologue. We see Athena in the act of privileging her dear friend Odysseus and harming his enemy, roughly ordering Ajax onstage (71-3, 89-90) to display his brutal madness.40 We are encouraged to think that the action we are about to witness has long been the subject of her attention.41 Although she does not appear again, the sense of her power is hardly diminished during the course of the play. However, after the prologue, the action is developed and perceived from human standpoints only.

No Greek play actively encourages the audience to reflect on divine as opposed to human problems,42 Sophocles' plays perhaps least of all. But in this play he seems to insist that we should be concerned with the thrust of Athena's intention because he makes it so vivid and specific. In the first and third of the final three speeches of this complex prologue (118-120 and 127-133), Sophocles has the goddess state what the audience immediately senses is "the major idea" of the play they have begun to watch - although it is not a simple motif but a complex knot of linked ideas. In these speeches Sophocles delivers not, in fact, a statement of plot, but a rare though unmistakeable statement of theme.43

4For two recent discussions which draw out the implications of the complex "play within a play" of this prologue, see Segal 1989-90 and particularly Easterling 1993.
5For the dumbshow which must precede the first line, see Taplin 1978 40. Like the Zeus of PB, Athena has been keeping a close eye on the action.
7See Reinhardt 10-15 on the unique fabula docet effect.
Odysseus' response is typical of his relationship with Athena throughout the prologue: of course he does not dissent from anything she says - but he has his own, human reactions which are tangential to the lesson she is pointing. He articulates an associated theme in the play, pity. This exclusively human emotion⁴⁴ originates in the simple thought, "this could be me."⁴⁵

These three speeches together flag up the surface level "work" of this play as the exploration of ideas about mutability and friendship/enmity as they are articulated round the shifting phases of the action relating to Ajax' death.⁴⁶ The play explores

⁴⁴Divine pity, in the Iliad, certainly gets short shrift. When Patroclus gets the better of Sarpedon in Book 16, Zeus ἔλεησε (431) and expresses a painful dilemma about letting him die ("ό̂ μοι ἐγώ ... δοξῆς δὲ μοι κραδῆτι...", 433). Hera sarcastically disposes of his tender feelings for his son, who is, as she says, a mortal Τερετοποιητής (441). The bloody drops Zeus then sheds are primarily to be understood, as Janko points out, not as tears of sympathy (although 458-61 certainly cannot exclude pity) but as portents of intense fighting (cf. Hes. Scutum 383-5). The imminent death of Hector produces a very similar sequence, in which Hera's role of pointing out the impossibility of the king of gods and men acting from tender instincts is taken by Athena (II. 22. 168-181).

⁴⁵Cf. 1364-7, part of the stichomythia between Agamemnon and Odysseus:

Α. ἄμοις τοῦ νεκρὸν θάπτειν ἔδω;
Ο. ἔγγει για ταῦτα ἐνθάδε ἦσμεν.
Α. ἃ καὶ ἀσήμων ἀνήλθε οὐκ.
Ο. τῷ γὰρ μὲ μετεῖς ἢ μακατο πονεῖν;

⁴⁶The theme of friends/enemies in the light of constant change is constantly pushed to the forefront of our attention and rarely
relationships between human friends and enemies from the perspectives of Ajax, his immediate circle, Odysseus, Menelaus and Agamemnon. We follow their varied reactions to this knowledge, encouraged to "track", like Odysseus. All five, including Ajax, believe they act with φωνεῖεν, but the circuit-breaker which allows the play to close seems nothing indicated by Athena - it is the modest, restricted, response of Odysseus' pity.

So although the sense of her power continues to be expressed and felt throughout the play, the action seems to slide away from her programmatic words. As she says, gods have friends and gods have enemies: they like (and will protect) οἱ σωφρονεῖς, but will destroy οἱ κακοί. Ajax is destroyed and Odysseus flourishes. However, since the story line is not complete with the statement, "Ajax was a great warrior but Athena destroyed him," but rather, "Athena destroyed Ajax but he died honourably, and Teucer and Odysseus achieved an honourable burial for him." Athena's control over the play's micro-universe seems too short, her "narrative reach" appearing to extend only up to Ajax' madness - the starting point, not the end of the play. It is possible to think that the controlled suicide, achieved in full sanity, and the gaining of burial are solely human achievements, even that the successful ending is achieved in spite of the gods in the universe. The only other possible direct evidence of a divine plan - the report of Calchas' prophecies - merely confirms Ajax' hubris without containing any reference to the problem of his burial. No other PPDC presages it. Yet Ajax, Salaminian hero closely associated with Athens, cannot be

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allowed to drop. See Whitlock Blundell, 1989, 60-105. Menelaus' rhesis 1052ff., for example, is a splendidly specious political speech addressing exactly these issues. Too much emphasis, even in the recent past, has in my opinion been focussed on the impossible task of "understanding Ajax' frame of mind" at any one point rather than understanding e.g. 666-683 (beginning τοῦ γὰρ τὸ λόφον εἰσόρθεσθαι μὲν θεὸς τεκεῖν, μαθηρέσθαι δὲ Ἀτρακτος εἴθειν, κτλ.) in terms of the intricate patterning of the threads of thought which make up the play as a whole. This is a play, rather Racinian, in which all the characters are strongly bound to the theme they exemplify.

47Ajax' circle (in response to Ajax' rage and grief) 362-3, 371, 377-8, 383, 386; Ajax himself 677ff.; Menelaus (of the army) 1073ff.; Agamemnon (reacting to Teucer) 1257ff.

48Odysseus' practical expression of his sympathies is restrained by Teucer 1393-5.

49Quoting Calchas, the Messenger's anecdotes provide a background for Athena's hostility. (762-777). This evidence for Ajax' ἱδρυς or κακία comes into the play interestingly late. See below 134ff.

50On the subject of the play's division into two parts I very much like Taplin's vigorous comments: "It is incredible and yet typical, that the fact that Ajax is divided into two parts has so often been treated as though it were some accident or miscalculation, when Sophocles has constructed this division so carefully and deliberately, and when the relation between the two halves is so clearly one of his chief artistic concerns."

51The action of the play simply fails to yield to analysis in the moral terms reportedly proposed by Athena ... it resists any simple interpretation of the relations between gods and men." Easterling, ibid. 83.

52In earlier versions he may have died while still frenzied - or may not have been mad at any point. For a recent review of the tangled and fragmentary evidence from Cyclic epic and the first two plays of Aeschylus' Aiantaia trilogy, Judgment of the Arms and Thracian Women, see N.Haviaras, PH.D. thesis, London 1994. Ajax' state of mind and indeed his very character, especially during the "deception" and suicide speeches is hotly disputed: for Sophocles' deliberate brutalisation of the Homeric Ajax see Winnington-Ingram 1980, 11-57. March 1991 presents an opposite view, idealising the hero.

53The question of the means by which Sophocles achieves his rehabilitation of Ajax as a hero is relevant here: see previous
considered long-term enemy of Athena, goddess of the city. The loss of contemporary ideology, as well as detail of previous literary versions of the Ajax story, makes interpretation extremely difficult.54

We must also consider the particular perspectives created by Sophocles presenting Athena so clearly as the didaskalos for this particular telling of the Ajax story, rather than leaving her as a remote causal deity whose intentions are most strongly to be grasped in the closing scene (which would perhaps be an Aeschylean way of handling the same material: we seem to have the opposite movement here). At the outset Sophocles makes a strong appeal to the authorial as opposed to the narrative audience in that we are invited to consider the action not as a free-standing story, but as one taking place within the frame of "a play showing Athena ruining Ajax."

How is one's perception of Athena as power affected by having her step outside a remote actantial role and onto the stage? In my view, the more she invites comparison with humans by being shown dealing directly with them, the more compellingly inexplicable the question of her motivation becomes.55 No doubt this feeling is deliberately aroused.

Some broadening of our understanding of actantial power might seem to be forthcoming from Sophocles' obvious recreation of Homer's world in this play, if the divine forces there were to have the same functions. The world of the Iliad is recreated in many ways.56 Above all, Ajax frequently recalls Homer's Hector. The reference is strongest in the Ajax/Tecmessa scene with its delicate echoes of, and departures from, the battle scene between Hector and Andromache.57 Hector and Ajax had, like Glaucus and Sarpedon, exchanged gifts on the battlefield.58 This not uncommon overstepping of the friends/enemies line, already suggesting that the heroes have a common identity in various ways, is developed further in Sophocles' play.59 In fact, the entire shaping of Ajax' fate seems to have been moulded to

note and Easterling 1984.
54But see Vidal-Nacquet 1988 for an excellent exploration of the status of the Homeric hero within a civic context.
55Easterling, 83 remarks: "How can we tell, indeed, whether her action is to be seen as vindictive cruelty, or impartial justice, or even damage-limitation in the interest of a favoured human being?"
56E.g. the geography of the Greek camp at Troy is stressed at 412-16, 418-27, 654-5, 862-5, 1165-6. See Taplin 1978 87-8.
57See Easterling 1984,1-8 on these two scenes, Iliad 7. 309ff. and Ajax 430-595..
58Iliad 7. 303ff.
59Hector's words to Ajax as the two decide to give up fighting and yield to the failing light seem highly relevant to the concerns of Ajax (Iliad 7.299-302):

"δάρα δ' ἤγου ἄλληλοις πειραματὰ δέσσαμεν ὄμορφα
depare tic δ' ektišei an' Aχαιῶν τε Τρώων τε-
"ἡμᾶν ἐμαραθηθεὶν ἔριδος πέρα τομοβόροιo,
τὸν πάντα ἐν ψευδοτήτι διεξάγαγον ἀρμήξαντε."
mirror Hector's, even if some of the story items are ordered differently. In both cases a hero fatally tricked by Athena suffers great dishonour. Before the crisis in which they die, both resist pathetic appeals from their families. They die heroically, after expressing an understanding of their fates. Their corpses fall into enemy hands, but ultimately a successful appeal is made for the possession of the body. Both epic and tragedy end with preparations for the funeral. Unlike Hector, Ajax dies voluntarily, "by his own hand", but the great stress on Hector's sword as the "actual" agent of his death, forces us to understand Hector and Ajax as an heroic, paradoxical, indivisible "one" in their deaths.

Although Ajax' own view is that the friends/enemies boundary cannot be successfully crossed, and in his view the sword is confirmation that he and Hector are diametrically opposed enemies (661-5, 817-8, μάλιστα μισηθέντος), this is not the final view. Their mutuality is strengthened again later when Teucer overtly sets their fates side by side 1028-35, telling us that Hector gave the fatal sword but Ajax' gift was his buckler, with which Achilles dragged the dead Hector behind his chariot. Thus by a typical dramatic paradox, both gifts, in word friendly items of exchange between enemies, were in fact mutual instruments of death:

\[ \text{ án̓} \text{ῤ} \text{ὀ} \text{ύκ \ Εριν̓υς \ τὀ} \text{τ̓ \ χἐ} \text{άλκευσε \ ξ̓} \text{ίφως} \\
 \text{κά̓κἐ} \text{τ̓} \text{νὀ} \text{ν \ Αί̓δ̓ης, δ̓ημιουργ̓ος \ άγ̓ριος;} \\
\text{έ̓γ̓ω \ μέ̓ν \ ὀὐν \ κἀι \ τἀ} \text{τ̓} \text{α \ κἀι \ τ̓ \ πά̓} \text{ἀ} \text{ν̓'} \text{ά} \text{ἐ} \text{ἰ} \\
\text{φά̓ςκομ̓ι \ άν̓ \ ἀνθῤωπὀι \ μἠχἀν̓ἀν \ θἐo̓ς;} \text{ (1034-7)} \]

Taplin sensitively remarks that it is with the action accompanying these words - the drawing of Hector's sword out of Ajax' body - that the play reaches "the turning-point away from the low ebb of despair". The accompanying words suggest a muted anagnorisis acknowledging that, in this synthetic Homeric universe, the theoi which devised Hector's fate also devised Ajax' suicide. These forces, symbolised by the sword, are Erinys, Hades and "the gods".

By these means, Sophocles broadens our view of the actantial structure, but without offering any new, neat insight into power in this play. His concern is more to restore

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60 As Easterling notes, the unusual phrase κολύμνη κόπατον for Hector's grave (Iliad 24, 797) is twice used for Ajax' (Aj. 1165 and 1403). Moreover the difference between honorific Homeric cremation followed by burial, and simple burial as here, is obliterated. Burial would align smoothly with the story in the Little Iliad that the hero was refused cremation and had to be buried in a coffin: see Easterling 97 n.4. She further suggests that for hero cult the idea of a physical body is important.

61 Teucer personifies it as φονεύς, murderer, at 1026.

62 The available evidence suggests strongly that Sophocles is innovating in this respect.

63 Taplin 1978, 87.
Ajax' reputation by aligning him with (as opposed to against) the forces in the universe. Sophocles' world, like that of his predecessors, contains multiple deities who are interconnected causally but do not necessarily appear to act in unison from the point of view of mortals. In Homer, the appearance to Hector of Athena disguised as Deiphobus is preceded by a scene in which Zeus reluctantly grants permission for his death, reminded by Athena that Hector is a mortal (22.179). Zeus holds out the scales which spell out Hector's doom (22.208-13) and Hector's Ker goes down to Hades. Out of all this activity, Hector sees only the disguised Deiphobus, although he can guess some of the rest (22.297ff.). Sophocles subtly but unsurprisingly suggests the same kind of thing: Athena acts in unison with other, profounder forces. The fact that Zeus fulfills Ajax' prayer (824-31) certainly adds weight to the feeling that Zeus is part of actantial power.

So the specifically Homeric colouring of the play does not provide any particular evidence of actantial power. The prayer to Zeus is fulfilled, but there is no sense of imminent fulfilment in Ajax' prayer to the Erinyes for revenge, despite its repetition by Teucer 1389ff. The primary function of such prayers and curses presumably lies largely in their evocation of the Homeric world. It is, of course, well-established tragic irony to show Erinyes-curses invoked against enemies when what we have witnessed is something of that familiar Aeschylean conundrum wherein the Erinyes make enemies identical in fate.

Other references to gods are slight, if potent in their context. Tecmessa says that Ajax dies theois, 970. It seems typical that the deities Odysseus invokes to plead for Ajax' burial are also so muted: just "the gods" at 1332 and 1343, and Dike at 1335.

It is impossible to separate the sense of "rightness" at the end, of an action brought - by human endeavour - to a good telos, from the sense that the gods intended it this way. Of course it is the human interactions which hold the foreground of our attention. But several factors, if we care to contemplate them, hint that despite the initial cruelty of Athena's treatment of Ajax, a not un-benevolent power has extended over the entire action: firstly, Athena has diverted Ajax' fury with a madness that makes him kill cattle, not Odysseus and the Atridae. Their deaths would have been a

44 The dative expresses relation: "his death is a matter between the gods and himself, one in which the Greek chiefs have no part...the implied meaning is that his death has been brought about by the gods; but theoi should not be taken as a dat. of the agent...Tecmessa's phrase is more expressive and more pathetic." (Jebb)

45 The sense of harmony at the end of this play contrasts sharply with the despairing sense of outrage expressed by Hyllus Trach. 1264-74 and the speaker of the final lines: χωλά καὶ κήμετα τούτων ὧν μὴ Ζεῦς...
total disaster for the Greek side and had to be averted. Admittedly, not much can be made of this point. Secondly, Athena's anger with Ajax emphatically extends over one day, mimicking the course of the play. The idea is introduced first as part of a gnome about mutability in the prologue 131-2, but enters again in Calchas' prophecies, modified as just this one day (753, 756, 778), giving rise to a sense of acute danger and emergency for Ajax.

Both sets of one day references as they occur seem only to indicate Ajax' downfall. However, when the movement of the play is complete, the opening expression 131-3 seems to have a perfect relevance:

\[
\text{o\-} \text{cTcav} \text{x}\text{a} \ \text{xavGpcoTieia} \ \text{xoog} \ \text{Oeoi} \\
\text{K a i} \ \text{oxoyoCai} \ \text{xoùg} \ \text{KttKOOç.}
\]

One day has seen Ajax cast down and literally raised again (the physical action of Teucer in the exodos, achieved against the wishes of the Atridae). Ajax' fate exemplifies the human condition (\text{t\-} \text{a} \text{v} \text{t} \text{h} \text{r} \text{w} \text{p} \text{e} \text{i} \text{a}). Athena does not have to be seen as permanently implacable towards Ajax.

Sophocles is an oblique dramatist, operating in a metatheatrical dramatic convention which shows all stage figures in masks. Theatre gods must obey dramatic rules: they are not identical either with gods worshipped at cult sites or gods discussed by sophists. They should not be understood as anything more than a "partial or oblique reflection of true godhead." (Easterling, 79). It is this ambiguity and obliquity which Sophocles repeatedly makes use of for his tragedies: here he gives us a sense of actantial power which is altogether baffling in terms of logical analysis, but is absolutely right to explore the mystery of Ajax' fate.

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66The constraints of myth prevent any real probe into this possibility, nor is it encouraged by the poet.
67Athena is god of Athens and Ajax is a significant Athenian cult-hero. The home-sick lyrics of the chorus of Salaminian sailors implicitly remind us of this important and positive connection.
CHAPTER 6: NARRATIVE LOOPS AT AJAX 646-865, TRACH. 180-496 AND PHIL. 541-627

A unique narrative technique of major importance in the plays of Sophocles is a feature I call "narrative loops". Narrative loops occur when Sophocles makes a temporary deviation from a plot line, rejoining it again at the point of exit. It is fascinating that all such deviations largely consist of deceitful or at least ambiguous narratives. This is the case both when the plays dramatise established myths (in which case the false nature of the narrative and the return to the traditional story line at the point where it broke off is in some sense inevitable),¹ and when the plot is apparently original and thus unbounded by traditional constraints. In the second case the "loop" is all the more to be understood as a deliberately chosen, free creation of the poet.

The function of these deceitful narrative loops is complex, debatable, and of course dependent on the concerns of each individual play. All the same, one can observe some general characteristics: the stage figures can be tested out against a wider range of experience than would otherwise be possible. They can experience powerful emotions in quick succession - joy, sorrow, anxiety, grief, resignation. Different outcomes can be explored on a temporary basis, perhaps ultimately reinforcing the authority and inevitability of the one that is ordained. Themes of time and mutability can be explicitly or implicitly explored. Irony is inevitably created, often made all the more telling because the movement towards disaster is seen to spring spontaneously out of quite innocent and "natural" human reactions. At the same time a highly sophisticated appeal is often made to the authorial as opposed to the dramatic audience, who are forced to question the normally unchallenged truth-value of dramatic narrative. The play may draw attention to its own theatricality by showing the fictive stage figures taking on further fictive roles. The content of the false narrative often imitates the main story, so that different elements are shown refracted, as if through a prism. Exploring the strategy of these narrative loops seems to take us to the heart of some of Sophocles' subtle and extraordinary narrative practices and seems to justify the conclusion that he was fascinated by falsehood and its effects.

¹See Ar. Po. 1453b10, quoted p.121 n.30.
The so-called Trugrede 646ff. is the only deceitful Sophoclean rhesis not delivered as a message narrative to other stage figures. It is a one-speech episode which it is difficult not to call a soliloquy, except that Tecmessa and the chorus are still on stage while Ajax speaks (in fact he sends Tecmessa inside and gives the chorus an order, 684ff.). I take the now widespread view that it is only the other stage figures who are to be deceived into supposing Ajax intends anything but suicide and that, apart from this requirement, the gravity of his reflections must preclude the audience from understanding them as false statements.2

The significant new perspectives adopted by Ajax accord with those he makes in the suicide speech 815ff. which is a soliloquy. Why then does Sophocles not run the two speeches into one and have Ajax kill himself then and there? This would be infinitely simpler and not beyond the possible conventions of Attic theatre. After the end of the single speech Tecmessa and the chorus, still onstage, could merely be depicted as too slow or physically incapable of preventing him, as Iphis and the chorus cannot prevent Evadne leaping onto her husband’s pyre, or as Oedipus and the chorus cannot prevent the capture of his daughters.3 The necessary φθόνος and λαύθονεν involved in this could add to the sense of dolos and tragic irony. Why take the risk of making this tremendously significant speech ambiguous, thereby possibly weakening its impact and confusing the audience? Why follow it with the misleading ἕρωτας ode and then the inessential messenger scene which tells us nothing of crucial importance for the future of the play, but brings about the great disruption of emptying the stage of the chorus and bringing them on again?

The frame of the loop is Ajax’ two speeches in which he develops a series of insights into his situation, finding perspectives about time and change originally indicated by Athena 131-2. His mood of aggressive, angry rejection gives way to a superb philosophical resignation (646-9, 669-84). He feels some pity for his wife (652). He makes some provision for his family (687-9, the prayer of 848ff.) His hatred for the Atridae and Odysseus is unabated (835ff.), but he speaks of reconciliation with them and with the gods (666-8). In particular, the series of prayers to different gods in his suicide speech indicates a change of heart from the man who at 589ff. thought his relationship with the gods was over. Although his thinking arises naturally from the

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2See Stevens’ article: it is clear that critics are never likely to agree on the exact reference of each separate sentence of the speech.

3E. Supp. 1034-1071 OC. 816ff.
immediate crisis, the beauty and elevation of these speeches remove Ajax, while still alive, from the immediate to a more timeless realm.

Contrast helps achieve this: these two rheseis, uttered in actual or virtual solitude, contrast violently with the "busy" group activities they frame, which are characterised by misunderstanding, urgency, futility, even muddle.

Throughout this part of the loop Sophocles makes continuous play with our expectations and emotions by a series of subterfuges. First, as authorial audience, privileged to see the prologue, we know better than to share the chorus’ delight at Ajax’ supposed decision to stay alive. All the same, as narrative audience it is hard to be unaffected by their exuberant joy especially at 710-14, ending with the thematically significant πάντα ο´ μέγας χρόνος μαραηνει. In fact, looking back on the antistrophe of this ode from the perspective of closure, the chorus will later seem to be not so much wrong as merely premature. Sophocles’ next subterfuge plays on the conventional shaping of tragedy: the entry of the messenger immediately after the lyric seems to be about to give the lie to their hopes - but no, the audience is as much surprised as the chorus when an entirely unexpected narrative of recent/immediate past now begins (note vivid present tenses at 720, 722). An angry offstage army is economically evoked, baying for Ajax’ and his brother’s blood.

The long perspectives established in the Trugrede have vanished and for the first time the anger of the army and of the Atridae becomes a very real threat - one which will later develop from its offstage position here to take centre stage. But despite its proleptic importance, this introductory narrative is abandoned. The exchanges 733-9 refocus our attention into a second, equally unexpected area. Psychological naturalism motivates the movement from one topic to the next. At the same time, tremendous ironies are generated. When the chorus say Ajax is absent (νεας βουλας νεοισιν εγκαταξινεξας τροποις, 735-6), with all the discrepant implications of that repeated adjective, the long-expected idea of "too late" is at last expressed. The messenger cries ιοδο ιοδ and then says, βραδεταν ημας αρ ό τηνδε την οδον πεμπαν έτεμπεν, η’ φανην εγω βραδύς (738-9). The repeated adjectives ironically mirror the two earlier ones. The audience, by convention, would naturally have associated the messenger's cries with news of the hero's death - but now we are ignorant of their reference. After the chorus' optimism is rightly dismissed as ταπη

*Cf. for example Trach. 225 when Lichas re-enters after a joyful ode celebrating the Old Man’s news, or OT 1110 when the Corinthian shepherd enters after the same.
There seems to be no tradition for 748-83, the narrative of Calchas' prophecy, which increases our understanding of both past and future. The frame of the speech (751-6, 778-83) has immediate proleptic relevance: it is the risk to Ajax of divine punishment from Athena today only, stressed 753, 756, 778 (see also 801-2). The warning has the obvious important function in stage terms of removing the chorus and allowing for Ajax' solo suicide speech. Like the Trugrede it too is a partial dolos, in the sense that it sets the chorus off on a fools' errand. Moreover, the emphasis on today makes a polar contrast with Ajax' panchronic sense of time: now we are back in the minute-by-minute, blow-by-blow world of panic and confusion.

The prophecy gives the audience much to grapple with. The possibility of open outcome is raised at 778-9, but as so often with Sophocles it is unclear whose interpretation this is in the first instance - Calchas' or Teucer's. It resembles the Aeschylean technique of sustaining unrealistic optimism encountered in the choruses of Pers. and Ag.. Probably discrepant awareness between the stage figures and the audience is recreated: the stage figures go to look for a living man - the audience think the search will be for his body. Given the audience's fore-knowledge, the chorus' eager anxiety is all the more pitiful, especially after the previous scene in which they have displayed their helpless dependency. The time at which the prophecy enters the world of the play is another feature which possibly puzzles the audience. Has not Athena's punishment already been carried out in the form of Ajax' madness during the hours of darkness? They might wonder if his suicide is part of her punishment too. Again, the anomaly and general vagueness is never explored and is not to be logically understood. What the audience see displayed is the pain and confusion of the human condition.

The speech is also important analeptically. We learn (1) that at the ritually significant moment of setting out for Troy, Ajax contradicted his father and insulted all the gods,
and (2) that at Troy itself he specifically insulted Athena. These two linked items of information help to redefine Ajax in the audience's eyes as a tragic theomachos, aligning him to other theomachoi in myth and tragedy. It also gives us a wider background from which to understand the brutal relationship between Athena and Ajax in the prologue. A shape is developed for Ajax' life which is that of a typical hero: thus paradoxically, his restitution is greatly assisted by this clear statement of his errors.

Like Deianeira and Eurydice after her, Tecmessa has missed the messenger's initial information. The exchanges 784-814 are busy with fresh informing, reacting, clarifying the issues and making a plan of action which involves ordering the chorus offstage. The bustle and urgency here could not provide a greater foil to the reflective dignity of the following suicide speech, itself followed by the almost comic (?) dochmiacs of the returning chorus, concerned for their own unheroic ponos.

This loop achieves a great deal - not only a spatial but also an enormous qualitative separation between Ajax and his dependents. Sophocles focuses this separation round their very different reactions to what can happen in one day, juxtaposing one day and "all long unnumbered time." The chorus' all-too human fallibility is distinguished from the hero's profound heroic insight and controlled suicide. Information about Ajax's past acts of hubris mitigates the divine harshness of the prologue, giving him paradeigmatic status. The longer perspective of this information, reaching back over ten years, and the infinitely longer time-frame of Ajax' first soliloquy have pulled the audience back from the immediate, urgent action to give a new view sub specie aeternitatis.

6.2 Trachinia 180-496

Through the interplay of Deianeira with the Old Man and Lichas - a false and a true messenger duo - Sophocles creates an extraordinary scene of dolos. The investment in it is very large and it is long and intricately shaped. Like the other

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Vidal-Nacquet's discussion of the "language des images" in the iconography of Ajax's suicide (1988, p. 476ff.) provokes the thought that visual art is more readily equipped than literature to explore the ironic/tragic conjunction of (a) frozen moments of eternal time with (b) the continuing time-world inhabited by the viewer/audience. It is exactly this conjunction which Keats explores in Ode on a Grecian Urn.

A similar technique is used again in OT. At 924-1046 Oedipus receives the true but incomplete information from Polybus' shepherd that Polybus is dead and Oedipus is not his son. This is followed by true information from Laius' shepherd that Oedipus is the son of Laius (1123-1181). See Longo 79-80. Reinhardt's comparison of the scenes from the two plays (43-4) is marred by his excessive emphasis on the theme of Sophocles' stylistic development.
Chapter 6

136

deeceitful/ambiguous narratives in the loops under investigation, it is also quite
unnecessary in terms of the fabula, since Deianeira does not send the poisoned robe
as a result of Lichas' false narrative - in this play of manifold narrative doloi, it is
Nessus' false narrative (569-577) which produces that result. Why have the Old Man
at all, producing such a complex narrative sequence instead of proceeding straight to
the true account?

Within a brief space the scene provides for two miniature reversals rather than one,
exemplifying the theme of mutability in human affairs which is so prominent in this
play: first, anxiety to joy (χάρα vocabulary at 179, 201, 227-8, 293; τέρπων 291 -
this passage provides the only relief from the otherwise unrelieved sombre tones of
the play - ) then joy to apparent resignation. Like other scenes from nostos dramas, it
exploits the "waiting for news" setting to underline the ironies of getting true
information, of acquiring knowledge. This is manifested most clearly in the
extraordinary, almost comic dead-end agon between the two messengers (402-435).
The loop also touches lightly on two other possible endings - Deianeira does not find
out about Heracles' relationship with Iole (329-334); alternatively - this option is
explored more thoroughly - she finds out, but out of pity and noble generosity
decides to take no action (436-496). Above all, the loop seems created to test out the
character of Deianeira's love and loyalty - beyond what was ever asked of Penelope -
showing how that seemingly most natural and tender of emotions, a good wife's love,
can produce the most terrible Medea- or Clytemnestra-like consequences.

Given the slight disjunction between the noble, sympathetic and resigned Deianeira
of 1-496 and the actively scheming, deceitful figure of 531-632, it is tempting to
suppose that in early versions of the story Deianeira, in accordance with her name,
might have been represented as a woman in the Clytemnestra mould, deliberately
destroying her husband out of jealousy. At any rate, Sophocles' version adapts the
heroine, turning her into a model wife. Then her fatal action, by its very lack of
consistency with the noble character developed particularly within the loop (and
most of all in the speech 436-69 calling for honesty), would most ironically reveal

8See Kraus 1991 for an overall survey of the sequence of "story-telling" in Trach.
9Tender emotion, such as love or pity, giving rise to disastrous consequence seems to be one of Sophocles' favourite ironies -
eg. the fatal pity of Laius' servant who failed to carry out the order to expose the infant Oedipus (emphatically positioned
κατοικήτως, 1178).
10Davies reviews the inconclusive evidence and diverse scholarly opinions, xxx-xxxi.
11Suppressing Megara, Deianeira becomes Heracles' only lawful wedded wife. This is important. Deianeira knows about the
many other women Heracles has loved, but Iole represents a unique threat to her wedly status: not only does this scene show
her moving in under the roof (συμπόνιαν ὑποστέγαν, 376-7), but we also learn that Heracles, despite outward appearances, has
sent her οὐδέ παντες δόλαιν (367).
12Winnington-Ingram makes this point, 1980 78ff.
"the beast-like strength and violence of *eros* at work in human beings." I do not follow Reinhardt in believing that Deianeira’s speech to Lichas is intended to deceive him since in my view a major function of the loop is to display her *γενναιότης*. This speech should indeed be compared to the so-called *Trugrede*, but not for its deceptive qualities. Rather the opposite, in both cases the dignity and elevation of the rhetoric (in the case of *Trach*, contrasting sharply with the "near-colloquial brawling" of Lichas and the Old Man) preclude the possibility of deliberate *dolos* on Deianeira’s part.

The Old Man enters into a scene of anxious waiting, like the openings of *Pers.* and *Ag.* except that the focus is exclusively on Deianeira's life of dread. More specifically, Deianeira has just released the information (156ff.) Heracles gave her when he departed: now three months and a year are up:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{τότ’ ἦθανεῖν χρείη σφε τῶδε τὸ χρόνῳ} \\
\text{ἡ τοῦθ’ ὑπεκδραμόντα τὸ πρὸνον τέλος} \\
\text{τὸ λοιπὸν ἦδη ζήν ἀλυπήτου βίω...} \\
\text{καὶ τῶνδε ναμέρεται συνβαίνει χρόνου} \\
\text{τὸ νῦν παρόντος ὥς τελεσθῆναι χρέων. (166-8, 173-4)}
\end{align*}\]

The presentation of Heracles' situation is interestingly identical to Ajax's (*Ajax* 749ff.): both have reached a potentially fatal either/or day of crisis which the audience can "read" as co-extensive with the action of the play. The chorus hush Deianeira by referring to the need for εὐφημία and by pointing out the garland worn by the approaching Old Man.

*Deianeira is deceived, 180-334*

With his headline ὅκνου σε λόσσω (181), the Old Man provides an immediate answer which contradicts Deianeira's forebodings. The danger from the oracle appears to...
be already over (and the question of its fulfilment is not to be an issue again until Heracles himself brings it back into play nearly 1000 lines later (1165ff.). The evocation of an emotional crowd (188-9 and 193-9) closely parallels Ajax 721ff. After cautiously questioning the messenger's credentials (187, 192) Deianeira allows herself to cry out exultantly ὡς ζεῦ (200) and orders the chorus into their brief lyric, ἀνοιχτοφεῖτο δόμος (its jubilance only faintly stained by the sinister epithet μελλόνυμφος).22

Lichas enters with a train of slave-women (229). No advance reference prepares us for the deceptive content of his speech and (ignoring the ironies) until 335 everything that is said seems to confirm that all is well (cf. his opening line εἶ ... εἶ). Despite more judicious questions 236, 239, 242-3, 246-7, Deianeira's address ὡς φίλατρος ἄνδρον23 and repetition of πρῶτα (232) indicates the natural overflow of excitement and generous love triggered by the good news, which will also produce her pity for the slaves, and, later, for Iole (242-3; ἴδιοι οἰκτραὶ γάρ, εἰ μὴ ξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσι με).

Lichas' long rhesis (248-90) is triggered by a question which tries to make sense of time, another theme in the play: the unusual contradiction of the opening (οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν πλείστον ἐν Λυδίων χρόνον κατείχεθ', 248-9) might suggest some fudge about how Heracles has been spending his time. However, the complex abundance of Heracles stories and our ignorance of pre-Sophoclean versions of this one in particular,24 make it hard to guess at the level of discrepant awareness likely to be evoked in the audience by the details here and in the following speech.25

At the least, though, Lichas' speech contains some oddities. It has an unbalanced time sequence (b-c-a-b-c),26 lacking the symmetry of ring composition. Heracles' insults from Eurytus and his act of revenge become the central focus (260-73), thus appropriately highlighting the major falsehood of the speech, i.e. that the motive for the sack of Oechalia was revenge alone.27 The strangely interrupted pattern of his revenge, coming in two instalments with first the murder of Iphitus and, after the

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22The movement of this loop away from the oracle is another dolos. The audience are encouraged to think that the plot has moved on from one point of "narrative bifurcation" - ἤ θανεῖν.. ἤ ζην -to another one, "Which of the two women can claim Heracles as her own?" Later they will understand the two issues are inseparable.
23If correct and if correctly taken with δόμος: see Easterling ad loc.
24For review of the evidence see Easterling 15-16, Davies xxii-xxx.
25Although as Easterling notes, several of the details have been guaranteed earlier in the play.
26See Davies xxiii for "The Sack of Oechalia" as a folk-tale with "the contest for a bride" as its original, now suppressed motif.
sojourn with Omphale, the destruction of the city, may already have been traditional, but that would not entirely dispel the sense of its strange circularity.

Lichas' anxiety is revealed by ως φησι αὑτός 249, ός αὐτός λέγει 253, ἔφασκε 261. These phrases possibly trigger suspicion about the entire speech, but Lichas' anxiety centres on having to say that Heracles has been forced into servitude. On the face of it, his anxiety here is surely misplaced, since servitude was the well-known and entirely acceptable condition for the most glorious sequence of events in Heracles' life - the mighty labours performed for Eurystheus.

The anxiety is better understood to be about the idea of serving a woman, in this case Omphale. As with all Sophocles' deceptive speeches, both the content and the gaps, while unable to contribute to the overall action of the fabula, nonetheless contribute richly to the themes of the play. Similar stories are superimposed over the main plot of the play, as in the False Merchant scene in Phil. (see p.150). Since he is addressing Heracles' wife, Lichas naturally enough refrains from alluding to her husband's well-known sexual servitude to this woman, one among many women to be the object of Heracles' enormous lust. At 459-60 Deianeira herself acknowledges the existence of these "very many other women." It could be that alert members of the audience would find concealed in this speech, references to not one but two episodes of Heracles' sexual enslavement.

The references to Heracles' slavery to Omphale (250, 252, 276) and to Eurytus (267), later joined by references to the slavery of Oechalia and its women (257, 283, 302), combined with the concrete on-stage presence of Iole silent among other slave-women, all together accumulate into a dense motif in which over and over again we experience the power of Eros or Cypris as a force which subdues, destroys and particularly, enslaves. By the end of the loop, Lichas' closing couplet focuses this motif onto Heracles (488-9):

\[\omegaς\ τάλλα \ έκείνος\ πάντες \ άριστεύων\ χεροίν\ \\
\tauού \ τήσον \ έρωτος \ εἰς \ άπανθ' \ ἰσσων \ ἕφω.\]

In the lyric that follows (497ff.) the same motif is focused on Deianeira.

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28For example, Lichas will share the μυτίκος ἵστυον μόρος (357, cf. 775-82).
29In some stories Omphale bore sons to Heracles who were forbears of Gyges and Croesus; in Roman iconography he is represented as besotted by Omphale, exchanging clothes with her and sharing her spinning. Fifth century evidence is less clear. See LIMC V sub 2800.
Deianeira responds guardedly to the chorus' joyful reaction to Lichas' account. Their τέρψις ἐμφανής (291) is manifestly ironic when Iole is silently present on the stage. Deianeira's speech (293-313) and dialogue up to 334 also point up many painful ironies. Deianeira's understanding of the mutability of good fortune (296-8) - a wisdom about the human condition - is the personal characteristic that arouses her οἰκτός ἰδεῖνός. This particular modest piety which gives rise to pity was exactly the quality displayed in Odysseus in the earlier Ajax. There it produced reconciliation, but the movement here is in the opposite direction. Such feelings, far from saving Deianeira from aτε, are ironically stressed as directly causal in bringing about the slow change from deceit to fatal knowledge. More irony: the glancing inset prayer (303-6) prefigures the sufferings of the Heraclidae and the little genitive absolute τῇσδέ γε ζώσῃς ἐτί ironically hints at her own, unsuspectedly close death (described 899ff.)

As Deianeira turns to address Iole directly (307), the audience begins to experience the horrible tension of those watching a deceit about to collapse. The flow of narrative information disintegrates and ceases. Iole's silence recalls the scene between Clytemnestra and Cassandra, Ag. 1035ff., (and serves as a muted preparation for the change of tone at 531ff). The audience presumably understand that with three speaking actors already onstage, the silent figure is indeed a κωφόν πρόσωπον and cannot tell her own story, but the unconvincing nature of Lichas' ignorance adds to the strong sense of discomfort. The audience experiences the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen next.

Into this discomfort, the conjunction of the two women is ironic too. Overtly, wife and slave are at opposite poles of fortune, but in fact they have identical fates as ill-starred objects of Heracles' love. One narrative of destructive male violence describes both their lives, and Deianeira's sympathy has infinitely more self-identification in it than she realises.

In this section of the loop Sophocles briefly creates a pause, ironically offering the audience the opportunity to contemplate a happy outcome of simple reunion between husband and wife, while all the time the source of future tragedy, Iole, stands onstage.

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29The same adjective describes Heracles' ἀμερος, 476.
30It seems important to Sophocles to emphasise the causal connection: Deianeira's understanding of the human condition (nobly expressed again, 436-69), is overtly acknowledged by Lichas: ἐπεὶ σε μανθάνα θυγατή γρονοῦσον θυγατί κούκ ἀγγύμουνα (472-3) before he confirms the Old Man's report.
31This theme is developed throughout, eg. at 464-5 Deianeira says of Iole, ὅτι τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς τὸν βίον διάλειπεν.
Deianeira understands the truth, 329-496

At 329ff. Deianeira gives specific marching orders to all the onstage figures except the Old Man: πρὸς δὲ δώματα χωρῶμεν ἢ δὴ πάντες, ὦς σοὶ θ᾽ (Lichas) οἴ θέλεις σπεύδης, ἕγώ τε τὰνδον ἔξαρκῇ τιθῶ. There could hardly be a clearer indication that the scene is to end and that the chorus itself will exit. Then the Old Man’s sudden intervention initiates some moments of confused questioning about who is to remain on the stage. 33

A brief creation of uncertainty about what will happen next and who is to be on the stage to make it happen occurs again 387-92 when Deianeira is momentarily about to leave in search of Lichas. 34 How should these deliberate confusions over exits and entries best be understood? In both cases, Sophocles arouses and then defeats audience expectation, at the same time indicating (in the first case in particular) the depth of Deianeira’s ignorance. Then too, by imitating life’s contingent nature, he highlights how random and exiguous the threads are which, bound together, create a fateful action - and the parts of it that, by the dramatist’s fictive powers, we are going to see on the stage.

The first part of the loop created a dolos in which Deianeira was initially deceived into joy. This pays off in the second half: earlier joy makes pain doubly painful. The situation could not be worse: despite appearances, Iole comes as no slave (οὐδ᾽ ὀστε δοῦλην, 367) but as Deianeira’s replacement.

The scene of painful discovery is extended by the requirement that Lichas should confirm the Old Man’s report (mirroring his confirmation of the good news earlier). As official herald he, not the Old Man, is authorised narrator. The scratchy, extended agon (402-35) juxtaposes, on the one hand, a random messenger without official authority, speaking up initially for reward (190-1) and now out of a disinterested concern to establish the truth (373-4) and, on the other, a man overtly authorised to speak the truth producing (unprompted by his master, 480-3) a stream of half-truths and persistent evasions. 35

33 Cf. Easterling on 342-3: “Why does D. ask if Lichas and the rest (ἐκείνους) should be recalled when the Messenger has already told her to let them go (336)? The question emphasises her complete ignorance of what is to be revealed and adds to the dramatic importance of the revelation.”

34 The three most recent editors (Easterling, Davies, and Lloyd-Jones and Wilson) all follow Hermann in attributing the next line of uncertain response to the Old Man rather than, following L, the chorus - ἡμεῖς δὲ προσμένωμεν; ἢ τῇ χρή ποιήν (390) - of course, no one does leave because just then Lichas himself spontaneously reappears for commissions. But possibly, having made the chorus exit in Ajax, Sophocles teases the audience not only at 333 but also 390 into expecting it to exit here too.

35 Whether the lies were motivated out of pity for Deianeira’s feelings, fear of her anger or overriding loyalty to his master
The Old Man cannot get Lichas to acknowledge the truth. How will it become clear?
The stalemate prolongs the period of uncertainty. Both have appealed to Deianeira (400, 409, 429, 434), and this helps to motivate the striking *thesis* (436-69) in which she demands the truth.

The difficulty of obtaining an acknowledged truth has temporarily become the critical issue, and it is possible to "read" Deianeira's *thesis* as an ironical extension of this theme of deception/truth: that way, Deianeira's appeal for truth succeeds only by her conscious creation of lies about herself. But this view would run counter to Sophocles' purpose for his heroine in this loop. In total contrast, the speech in fact brings us to the summit of admiration for Deianeira: along with a repetition of the gentler virtues of *sophrosyne* she has already displayed, she now shows herself a fit wife for a hero, arguing cogently and showing an intellect and an ability to marshal appropriate arguments with admirable rhetoric. Only when she acknowledges the power of *Eros* over herself (444) we might find a hint of irony.

The scene ends on a note of uncomfortable harmony, possibly disturbed by the ἀντὶ δῶρων δῶρα χρῆ προσαρμόσα (494): Deianeira confirms her inactive position (490-2) and exits in a calm and queenly fashion, giving orders and promising rewards.

The end of the loop is not the end of the irony, however. Immediately after the choral ode Deianeira comes onstage λόθρα to speak to the chorus. Iole is now described without pity as "freight" (φόρτως, 537) and "merchandise (ἐμπόλημα, 538). The prospect of sharing Heracles' bed with a younger woman is, not surprisingly, intolerable, and she will take ("harmless") action to restore Heracles' affections to herself.

In an elegant transformation of narrative situations, the ignorant Lichas is now duplicitously entrusted to deliver to the husband a fatal object in return for his own fatal domestic gift: Deianeira achieves this by deceitfully capitalising on her successful narrative 436-69. At the same time, the horizon of trickery has widened: her deceitful words are also innocently bringing Nessus' fatal *dolos* to fulfilment.

The use of words relating to Iole in this scene is reminiscent of the words describing Heracles' slavery (see above). In both cases we are in the world of trade, where, at

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cannot be completely clear, and different productions are likely to produce different emphases.
some level, people and objects are items bought and sold for profit. The important notion of *narrative transaction* is also thematised here. In the previous scene Deianeira successfully bargained for Lichas' true narrative about Iole by offering a valuable narrative of her own (436ff.). Now she "trades" on it again: to send "merchandise" to her husband in return for the "merchandise" he sent home. In all this, Lichas continues to serve as the unlucky go-between. However, for all three parties these transactions are fatal.

**6.3 Philoctetes 541-627**

The narrative gaps, lies and ambiguities in this play are manifold, and yet the twists and turns of the story evolve out of one another with great psychological naturalism in a seemingly inevitable flow. Perhaps more than any other play, this one is a particularly delicate web, to be unpicked at any one point with extreme peril. To change the metaphor, Buxton's "bleeding chunks" objection to analysing one individual section in isolation from its wider context could not be more valid than for this play.

The narrative loop with the False Merchant, which is set into the long first episode (270-675) between Neoptolemos and Philoctetes, marks perhaps the peak of false narrative in the play - although an unfathomable number of lies have already been told and will remain unresolved. The False Merchant's lies act as a kind of foil to the lies Neoptolemus has been telling earlier, forcing a moral revaluation of what is entailed in *dolos*. In the loop, dialogue gives way to *dreigesprach* and the False Merchant, carrying out Odysseus' orders, is almost a disguised version of Odysseus himself. Fresh possible lies and fresh possible truths are superimposed over existent half-truths, and compounded by yet more metatheatrical references, teasing and taxing to the limit the understanding of both narrative and theatrical audience in a heightened play of ludic elements. Thanks to the survival of Dio's *Oratones* 52 and 59 we have some knowledge of Aeschylus' and Euripides' preceding Philoctetes plays. This gives us an insight into the high level of allusion and audience collusion in the scene, which must be set alongside the delusion of Philoctetes. The

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36See p.113. Narrative transaction is thematised even more clearly *Phil.* 578ff. See below,147ff.
37See Easterling 1978 27f. for a discussion of the piecemeal and ambiguous release of crucial information, especially concerning the prophecy; as she points out, the lack of crucial information required for full understanding is hidden behind a dramatic technique that always makes the motivation at any point extremely lucid.
38*Oratio* 52 is a somewhat disappointing comparison of the three Philoctetes plays, while *Oratio* 59 is a prose paraphrase of Euripides' prologue. Mette frr. 249-57 and 787-803 add a little more.
effect of all this is that the dramatic situation cannot be relieved of its ambiguity by close inspection of the words in the text or even by an analysis of the interplay of narratives.40

The loop also makes little sense in terms of furthering the plot to get Philoctetes off the island. Like El (but unlike Ajax and Trach.) the False Merchant's arrival is fully prepared in the prologue (125-131), and the level of detail and the emphasis mark this scene as an important part of the design of the play as a whole: we are told exactly how the scene is to be played (ποικίλως αὐδωμένου δέχοντα ςυμφέροντα τῶν ἀκί λόγων, 130-1). Yet unlike El., as critics comment with some perplexity, there is no need for this intervention - Philoctetes is already only too eager to come with Neoptolemus. Nor is there a direct consequence after his departure.41 At the same time, no PPDC element has presaged his arrival so as to give it a heightened importance. The narration of Helenus' prophesy creates no obvious major impact and does not contribute to the sense of urgency in the way that the report of Calchas' prophecy does in the Ajax loop.42 Certainly, the False Messenger's entry reminds us of the external urgency of the mission and of Odysseus, who had said he would send the skopos in disguise if he thought they were loitering (κατασχολάξειν, 127). Later on, at 974 and 1293, the audience discover that Odysseus has been snooping, but there is no evidence that this is the case here.43 (It is just possible that the audience can infer that Odysseus, counting the minutes, presciently intuits that a dangerous friendship has developed between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus to the detriment of his own influence.) But none of this justifies the scene's inclusion. We must find other grounds.

Understanding the loop means focusing on the transformative power of both observing, and participating in, role-play. Depriving Neoptolemus' and the False Merchant's words of truth-value, Sophocles forces us to take our own emotional responses as the only guide to Neoptolemus' hidden feelings. Only they can indicate whether any speech is "true" or not. The role of the actor is doubly significant under these circumstances. There is no actual proof of a change of heart in Neoptolemus until he reveals the deception 895ff. Acting, what it means to be involved in and

39 As Easterling remarks 29, "the important point is that almost every detail in Neoptolemus' behaviour can be variously interpreted."

40 For this reason Roberts' otherwise excellent paper on the play's conflicting narratives (1989) fails to do justice to this scene.

41 The apparent lack of necessity, in plot terms, of the False Messenger scene, is the starting point of Easterling's analysis.

42 "I am not entirely convinced by Garvie that the scene can be justified in terms of its "three-fold importance, in that it affects or serves to explain the behaviour of all three principal characters in the play." All the scenes do this, and so something more specific needs to be said to justify this one.

43 124 suggests Odysseus will be too far away to overhear.
respond to acting, and the effect on Neoptolemus of imaginatively empathising now with Philoctetes, now the False Merchant, seems to me to be a major underlying purpose of this loop, a creative decision made all the more bold for never being explicit. There is no escape from subjectivity here. The cumulative effects can only be guessed at later, when Philoctetes' outburst of pain and dependence finally produce Neoptolemus' overt change of heart.

The pre-theatrical, epic world dramatised by the Athenian poets precludes overt reference to the world of the theatre. Although much in the plays (dressing up, unseen observation, references to poets and song, and of course the deception scenes themselves) is clearly metatheatrical in nature, it must always remain implicit. 5

Hamlet, a play of the overtly self-conscious Renaissance theatre, makes an interesting comparison. There we find the same exploration of role-play, but the purpose of the scene can be pointed up much more clearly. Hamlet asks visiting players to perform The Murder of Gonzago, a play which mirrors his father's murder and thus tests his uncle's conscience ("I'll tent him to the quick," 2.2.593; deceit-as-a-test). The performance of the play-within-a-play is not thoroughly conclusive of Claudius' guilt. Earlier, however, Hamlet gets the First Player to recite a speech "he chiefly lov'd" from another play - a dramatisation of Aeneas' tale to Dido of the fall of Troy in which the distraction of Hecuba "the mobled queen" is graphically described. The player's passionate identification with his subject ("Look whe'er he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes") prompts Hamlet's soliloquy with its famous Hecuba reference in which he compares the powerful emotions released by acting "but in a fiction, in a dream of passion" to the "cue for passion" demanded by the moral requirement to avenge his father's death. Here in this narrative loop of Phil. Sophocles, bounded by different theatre conventions, leaves us to guess that a similar "tenting" of Neoptolemus' emotions takes place.

The False Merchant joins an already complex "double act" going on between Neoptolemus and the chorus to deceive Philoctetes. In this previous dolos, Neoptolemus is the major narrator and falsely informs Philoctetes, the narratee. Despite some superior knowledge, the audience too is caught by the playwright's dolos, since Sophocles has provided little guidance to discern true items of information from false. 45 The boundaries between true and false discourse have

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45 Ignorance is extensive in this play, within and without. Masaracchia 82 perceptively points out that it is only after getting Neoptolemus to investigate the cave that Odysseus gives him his instructions: "Neottolemo lo ha seguito senza conoscere forse la meta del viaggio." In this telling of the story, we do not know whether Odysseus rigged votes to get the arms of Achilles.
broken down. This confusing breakdown happens in conjunction with what is emotionally very positive - the growing friendship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes. Neoptolemus, we perceive, is good at lying, but part of his success, like that of any confidence trickster, surely lies in his ability to empathise with his victim. We also empathise with both these characters and in a very simple way are pleased to see the developing sympathy between them. The entry of a fresh liar gives us a sharp reminder of the deceitful grounds on which the relationship has been established.

In narrative terms, the Merchant is a new false narrator superimposed over the old one. This time the False Merchant is the major narrator while Neoptolemus takes over the (now silent) chorus' supportive but subordinate narrative role. But because Neoptolemus does not know exactly what the Merchant is going to say next, the young man, scriptless at this point, is also forced to some extent into the helpless position of narratee - one subjected to the authority of another's (lying) discourse, even though he is also colluding with it. His partial ignorance of the narrative situation thus overlaps with that of the utterly duped Philoctetes. Part of the function of this subtle "loop" is to get the audience to infer changes in the young man's moral perspective brought about by seeing him forced to improvise this difficult double role which puts him in close emotional touch both with the False Merchant and with Philoctetes. His convergence with each merits discussion:

Neoptolemus and the False Merchant

The False Merchant is a base stooge of Odysseus and the scene manifests Neoptolemus as also a stooge. Coming within the same scene, the Merchant's patently false opening speech forces the audience to re-evaluate the integrity of Neoptolemus' earlier words. Like Neoptolemus', the Merchant's introductory speech

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We do not know whether Neoptolemus was treated honorifically and given his father's arms when he came from Scyros. When Neoptolemus pretends ignorance of Philoctetes' identity he is certainly lying, but how are we to read 339-407 or 431-2, for example?

One might compare the range of ambiguities presented here with Medea's tears in her scene with Jason 899f. and 922f: the reasons she gives him for weeping are not the same as the true reason, but as audience we are not exactly sure how to interpret them anyway. Are they really for her children? Are they even "genuine"? Are they aimed at the chorus?

His instructions are to improvise: ποικίλας αδιαμέτρου δέχον τα συμφέροντα τών άει λόγων, 131-2. For Neoptolemus' similar instructions to the chorus, see 148-9.

The emotional effects of improvisation are attested by modern therapeutic work, which harnesses painting, dance and drama to help the mentally ill. Dramatherapy (in England newly established in the seventies, but originating in the work of J.L. Moreno in the field of psychodrama in the thirties in America) is increasingly used with e.g. criminal offenders, who are encouraged to act out both criminal and victim roles. See S. Jennings, *Dramatherapy: theory and practice for teachers and clinicians*, London, Sydney and Cambridge Mass. 1987.

Neoptolemos is Odysseus' πρόβλημα (screen), 1008.
542-56 is resonant with circumstantial detail. Talk of journeying home to the island of Peparethos (modern Skopelos), is interesting: the island, famous for its grapes, lies off the Malian Gulf near Philoctetes' home and its mention is not only convincing but might also be calculated to reinforce his homesickness: so much for the dramatic audience. At the same time the Merchant subtly colludes with the theatrical audience by inventing a variation on the theme of Homer's reference to the wine trade from Lemnos which supplied the Greek army while it was encamped at Troy (II. 7.467). (In this play Lemnos is wild and deserted). All this brings home the similarity of what went on before - Neoptolemus' variatio on his own story and the story of the fates of Greek heroes, with its selective chronology and suppression of variant epic versions in favour of the presentation most likely to move Philoctetes.50

The phrase προστίχοντι τὰν ἵσων (552) has been understood in various ways. It could mean "as I have got into the same situation as you," i.e. in being anchored at Lemnos (so Nauck, Radermacher and Webster; 546 is taken to support this reading). The parallel suggested by ta isa would then operate at a general level. However, the phrase has far more edge if it refers to the χάρις owed a messenger (so Jebb and Kamerbeek, supported by 557-8). It contributes to the idea that the False Merchant is playacting, that is, motivating his appearance by an apparent desire for a reward. As the messenger's concern for his reward is a frequent feature of tragedy, it establishes yet another pleasing collusion with the theatre audience.

This interpretation of the phrase also reinforces the parallels between the Merchant and Neoptolemus, pointing up that both are lying for kerdos - admittedly of different varieties. In the stichomythia of the prologue, Odysseus had convincingly used the idea of kerdos to motivate Neoptolemus (111-12). Later in this scene the False Merchant, true to his persona, expresses unheroic anxiety for the profits of his regular business (582-4).

After some deceitful stage business between the merchant and Neoptolemus, Philoctetes cries (578-9):

τί φησιν, ὦ παῖ; τί δὲ κατὰ σκότον ποτὲ
διεμπολῆ λόγοις πρὸς σ' ὦ ναυβάτης;

50Fate of Achilles, 332ff.; other Greek heroes, 410-52. See below. Cf. Winnington-Ingram 1980 340-1. Roberts 168-70 offers a different reading of this earlier scene. O'Higgins sees a failure on the part of the conspiratorial narrators to contain the effects of the past. The barriers between living and dead heroes limit Neoptolemus' authorial control, as it were.
The phrase "trades in words" again recalls *kerdos*. Osterud 21, discussing the conflict between commercial interests and friendship, writes of this phrase that it "may be interpreted as a mimetic representation of one of the central themes of the play, namely Neoptolemus's wavering between his commitment to the plot staged by Odysseus as representative of the Greeks, and his sympathy for Philoctetes, their enemy. Moreover the *sotto voce* bargaining about Philoctetes brings us back to the opening scene where Odysseus and Neoptolemus bargained about Philoctetes behind his back in a rather similar way." The model of narrative as a kind of money transaction in which the coinage can be gold or counterfeit, is thematised here.

Neoptolemus is forced to "chime in" with the False Merchant, just as earlier he had made his story "chime in" with Philoctetes'. But "chiming in" with a tradesman is a lowlier, more degraded form of deceit than telling your own lies. Reduced to this level, Neoptolemus is manifest as an unheroic agent of Odysseus' plotting. Odysseus has concocted lies and Neoptolemus has promulgated them. Philoctetes' indictment of Odysseus 407-9 had already suggested a reformulation of the moral perspectives adopted in the prologue. The effect of the loop is subtly to reinforce this revised judgement.

Neoptolemus and Philoctetes

Neoptolmhus has already established false or at least ambiguous parallels with Philoctetes. Both are victims of Achaean *doloi*. With subtle irony Sophocles makes both concur in the division of heroes at Troy into two basic groups: the deaths of noble heroes characterised as incapable of falsehood, such as Ajax, Antilochus, Patroclus and of course Achilles,^52^ Patroclus and of course Achilles himself are regretted, while the survival of braggarts and liars such as Diomedes, Thersites^53^ and of course Odysseus is a matter of scorn. No doubt the theatrical audience enjoyed the judicious selection from variant versions. But both are implicitly linked in other ways unconnected with deceit: their mutual respect for Achilles, for example.^54^ Both express filial concerns. Both too, I
would argue, start off in a position of emotional isolation. This is more than obvious in the case of Philoctetes, but it is interesting that Sophocles has not chosen to give Neoptolemus a Pylades-figure to be his companion and sounding-board, or any kind of accompanying mentor. The relationship between Odysseus and Neoptolemus in the prologue lacked any warmth. Odysseus used formal patronymic address to Neoptolemus (4, 50, 96) and Neoptolemus responded in kind (26, 87). Their relationship is militaristic and pragmatic - defined entirely by the job in hand. Now Neoptolemus has just had the powerful emotional experience of being the one to fulfil Philoctetes' intense longing for philoi. Philoctetes repeatedly calls him τέκνον. By such ambiguous remarks as 339-40 Sophocles leaves it open for us to think that, while arousing and exploiting affection, the fatherless young man is beginning to return it.

The effect of the loop must be to sharpen the ambiguity of this relationship. We seem to see Neoptolemus experience the confusion of siding with the False Merchant, mouthpiece of Odysseus, to deceive his friend, when his sense of φίλια towards him has developed at cross-purposes to the needs of the plot. It seems that the experience of acting out friendship for Philoctetes has produced real feelings of friendship. We are even invited to think at one point that his loyalties have shifted so profoundly that he is in danger of forgetting that hatred for the Atridae is only an act: his emotional declaration 585-8 produces the following antilabe 589-91:

EM. ὃρα τί ποιεῖς, πατ. NE. σκοπῶ κάγω πάλαι.
EM. σὲ θήσωμαι τῶν ἀγίων. NE. ποιοῦ λέγων.
EM. λέγω.

The scene ends in a verbal exchange over the bow - initiating later physical contacts and exchanges. The extreme respect and reverence Neoptolemus expresses for it, and the older man's generous response are moving. Whatever lies Neoptolemus has told and may still be telling, the two are seen to fulfil each other's mutual needs. Neoptolemus receives permission to hold the bow, although he does not do so yet. This suggests another, nobler kind of "transaction" to set against the deceitful verbal exchange. Neoptolemus' final speech, with its pun on Philoctetes, κτήματος κρείσσων φίλος 673, exactly expresses the dilemma he is in.

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Contemporary audience. Webster notes a red-figure cup (Beazley ARV 429, 26) dated to about 490 B.C. which shows on the outside the award of the arms to Odysseus and on the inside, Odysseus handing the arms over to Neoptolemus. Sophocles' (early) Skyrians dealt with the bringing of Neoptolemus to Troy, but we have little detail about the story.

φιλια- compounds are used by Philoctetes at 224, 229, 234, 237, 242, 242.

Some of these are discussed by Taplin GRBS 12, 1971, 27ff.
Narratives

After offering his impeccable false credentials, the False Merchant proceeds by "splitting" the simple diegetic narrative of the play so far, which is simply "Odysseus and Neoptolemus have gone to fetch Philoctetes". Two parallel false narratives are now temporarily introduced: (1) Phoenix and Theseus' sons have gone to fetch Neoptolemus and (2) Odysseus and Diomedes have gone to fetch Philoctetes.

The split narratives are fictions already in circulation. The theatrical audience are doubtless pleased by these allusions to other versions. In the Little Iliad, Odysseus went to fetch Neoptolemus while Diomedes brought Philoctetes. In their dramatic versions, Aeschylus and Euripides had ignored Neoptolemus altogether, and while Aeschylus sent Odysseus to Lemnos, Euripides sent Odysseus and Diomedes there. By sending both Odysseus and Neoptolemus to Lemnos at the start of this play, Sophocles has already interestingly conflated earlier versions. Now the sailor, presenting himself as a merchant and accompanied by another seaman, can be seen as one of yet another pair of deceitful figures making a sea journey to fetch or manipulate someone. The multiplicity of deceitful journeys creates a kind of narrative mise en abîme in which the world seems full of dupers and the duped. This illusory, transient effect of superimposition, in which one story merely mirrors another without an end point, seems to be yet one more of the functions of this particular, highly idiosyncratic loop.

The story of Helenus' capture and prophecy provides some resolution to this endless sequence. Although mentioned last and, because of its narration by a liar, deprived of any absolute truth value, it functions nonetheless as the narrative which is causally prior to all the others, the one which determines all subsequent "journeys by sea to fetch someone." Giving such an important narrative so absolutely unauthoritative a position in the play is very much part of Sophocles' subtle narrative strategy. By the end we will discover that the narrative the False Merchant ascribes to Helenus was a true prophecy, and that peitho (612) which, as subsequent scenes develop seems increasingly impossible, is despite everything the means that is successful in the end.

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37The earlier part of the scene also seems rich in references to earlier play versions. According to Dio, Aeschylus' version included false stories about Greek heroes - Agamemnon dead and Odysseus put to death. In Euripides' version (cf. Dio 59 8ff.), Odysseus pretended to be a friend of Palamedes, exiled from the Greek camp when Palamedes was accused of treason. Dio gives Philoctetes' reaction: Αι μηδενος ὑποσχόμενος ταν χαλκοπαστών, λόγω τε και ἕργο πανομαγόστατο άνθρώπων 'Οδυσσει. Sophocles' Philoctetes reacts very similarly: ξέρεις γὰρ τινας δεν λόγου κακοῦ γλώσση θηύγιναι κατ' οὐναγρίας, ἀν' ἴς μηδέν δίκαιον ες τόλος μέλλοι ποιέν (407-9).
It seems worth pointing out that the situations of Philoctetes and of Neoptolemus are all subtly refracted by the Helenus story. Helenus was forced against his will to use his unique gift to help his enemies, the same fate, it seems, that Philoctetes is to meet, both of them outwitted by Odysseus. Neoptolemus' discourse, which is in this scene unable to reveal the entire truth, is displayed against Helenus' prophetic discourse which could not lie (even though it is here narrated by a liar). Of course the play will later show Neoptolemus in the same situation of being unable to lie.
**CHAPTER SEVEN: SOPHOCLES ELECTRA**

*Dolos* is a traditional element of "return and revenge" plots. Philoi as well as echthroi may temporarily be deceived, in the sense that they are not informed of the hero's return. At *Cho*. 20-21 Orestes, who thinks he has already seen Electra with the advancing slave women (16-18) nonetheless decides to hide himself and watch them first. Having observed Electra's filial loyalty he emerges (212) with a speech which immediately declares their relationship. In Euripides' version the delay before mutual recognition is longer: Orestes decides to watch the "slave girl" (108); having recognised her he starts to converse without revealing himself (220ff.): finally the Old Man brings about mutual recognition (578). The extended delay in recognition in Euripides' version has been read by scholars and audiences as largely the result of Orestes' unheroic timidity. In neither play is there a deliberate policy of exclusion. It is exactly this which is so very marked in Sophocles' version. At 77 Electra cries out, offstage. The Pedagogy thinks the voice belongs to "some attendant" (78-9), but Orestes seems to intuit that it is his sister and suggests waiting to hear the laments, exactly as in *Cho*. But he puts his thoughts into the form of a question, to which the Pedagogy's resonant answer is ἱκτιστα (82). This very marked *Abbruch* begins what is arguably the biggest *dolos* in surviving tragedy.

Sophocles goes further than any predecessor. Electra and the chorus are also duped by the *dolios* narrative of Orestes' death, and this leads, via disbelief in Chrysothemis' true account and Electra's decision to take revenge single-handed, to the superb culmination of the recognition scene when this huge *dolos* drops away. Only then

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2 Sandbach (PCPhS 23, 1977, 71-3) suggested attributing 80-81 to the Pedagogue and giving Orestes 82-5, a proposal approved by Winnington-Ingram (1980, 229 n.40). This idea is properly squashed by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990, 44. Apart from their excellent arguments, I would add that, with the attribution as it stands, 80-5 creates a distinct echo of *Cho*. 899-902, in which Pylades forcefully intervenes to prevent Orestes' "softening", just as the Pedagogue does here.
3 In the creation of such an extended deceit, Sophocles is certainly indebted to the second half of the Odyssey. (N.B. Davidson 1988 discusses the Homeric influences in general in this play under three headings: 1) the story of Agamemnon's death and Orestes' revenge as in *Od*. 2) the echoes from *Od*. (and *Il.* in *El.* and 3) aspects of Homeric language in *El.* Penelope and Electra are compared 55ff.)
4 But compare similar strategies *E*. *IT* (before 412) and *Hel.* (412), although the tone is quite different. Both these romance plays build on false rumours of the hero's death, putting the heroine into a false situation despite the hero's return. In the prologue of *IT*, Iphigenia interprets her dream to mean that she has already sacrificed her brother (*IT* 42ff.). Orestes then appears to her trussed for sacrifice (467) and it appears that sister will kill brother - recognition is delayed until 827. Helen receives a visit from Teucer telling her Menelaus is reported dead (132). Despite his rags, however, Helen recognises her husband - but recognition does not become mutual until one of Menelaus' men reports the disappearance of the eidolon simulating Helen for the past seven years (621). These plot shapes identically draw on the full range of cognitive possibilities displayed in the veridictory square (p.114ff.).
does the traditional action - in terms of deed rather than word - begin to get under way. In this version then, the traditional story of Orestes' revenge refocuses around Electra and the entire section 82-1227 comprises an enormous bold loop, largely, although not completely, redundant in terms of the traditional *fabula* of return and revenge.

It is an extraordinary achievement. The forward movement of the action is handled with great subtlety so as to be almost imperceptible. All the same, the action advances *sotto voce* and the suspense created by the prologue remains undissipated. The scenes are theatrically dynamic, not least because of overlapping ludic effects - Electra is *deluded*, the theatrical audience *colludes* with the playwright in the web of *allusions* evoked.⁵

Despite this, it is the sense of a past continuing unchanged into the present which is strongly conveyed. On the level of individual words, this is achieved by many "frequentative" markers;⁶ at the level of scenic structure, each scene (successively chorus, Chrysothemis, Clytemnestra) follows the same pattern, which is that fresh items of news are invariably delayed until *after* there has been a generalised debate of attitudes to the whole situation of Agamemnon's murder and to Orestes' possible return.

For example, it is only at 310 that the chorus, who have been onstage with Electra since 121, make any reference to the present time by asking whether Aegisthus is at home or not. Similarly, Chrysothemis enters 328, the chorus remarking on her entry that she carries ἐνταφία (326), but even the report of possible walling-up is delayed until 379 and merely serves as stimulus for more antithetical argument. At last, 404-5, Chrysothemis recalls her mission to Agamemnon's tomb: however, then Clytemnestra and Electra argue the rights and wrongs of their positions 516-634. Each character generalises a good deal, in the present tense, about the other's fixed position. The result is that what we see enacted on the stage is taken as indicative of the entire period of waiting.

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⁵Short of a papyrus discovery, whether or not Euripides' version precedes Sophocles will always be unclear. The evidence is reviewed in Cropp 1988, 50-51. Burkert has recently proposed a date of 420 for Euripides' play (MH 47.2, 1990, pp.65-9).

⁶Frequentative markers taken only from the parodos 121ff. (but very much present elsewhere, particularly in Clytemnestra's opening speech 516-30): ἀλλὰ λάκκες 122-3; ἀκροδειτόν 123; ἀλλὰ στενάχθησα 141; ἀλλὰ ἐγέν 148; ἀκόμα καὶ τοιούτα προσεύμονον ... ἀλλὰ ὀρφιν 164-5; ἄλλ᾽ ἐμ ἐμ ὁ πολίς ἀποκλείσει τηδε βίοτος ἀνέλπτον 185-6; ฿εβε τοτ ἐκ κοριτσίων ἀποτάσσομαι ἀνάρθημον ἄδει θρήνον 231-2.
Waiting for news

Within the loop the stage figures repeatedly focus on the subject of Orestes' return, but none of their information is conclusive.

It is made clear in the parodos that Electra's entire hopes are centred round his return. News about him is described as always frustrated or belied (τὴ γὰρ οὖν ἐμοὶ ἔρχεται ἀγγελίας ἀπατώμενον; 169-70). In the first episode the chorus specifically ask for news again, and the ensuing brief conversation (317-323) highlights the ignorance of the participants and, as at 169-70, the gap between word and deed (φησίν γε. φάσκων δ᾽ οὐδὲν ὄν λέγει ποιεί, 319). Channels of communication are referred to, but to date there has been no authoritative statement either way, just some informal word of mouth coming to Electra, and maybe to Clytemnestra's spies.

Orestes' return is the subject which polarises the relationship between mother and daughter. Electra describes the alteration in her mother's behaviour "when someone hears that Orestes is coming," ὅταν κλόη τινὸς ἰδοντες ὀρέστην, 293-4. In the same speech she describes him as μέλλων ... αἰεὶ δρᾶν τι, 305. Waiting for him has significantly affected both women (305-6, 780-2). Electra admits that she would if possible have brought Orestes up to be μάστωρ of his mother's crimes (601-5). For both, Orestes' survival and possible return has the status of a life-or-death issue.

This chapter analyses each narrative leading up to the false message in turn, looking at the provenance (eyewitness account? divine utterance? unsubstantiated rumour?), the consequent authority of the statement, and the reception, both internal to the play and external to the audience. The loop is not completed until recognition finally takes place at 1227, but many of the points I wish to make can be illustrated within the smaller compass. The false messenger speech 680-763 is in itself a well-prepared climax for an entire series of concealed, abortive or delusive messages which together comprise this play of cheated expectation.

7.1 Prologue or outer plot 1-85: frame of play established; defective report of oracle; deceitful narrative planned; true narrative devalued

In the prologue the major structure of the play is mapped out. We are given a report of an earlier narrative and prepared for a future one: in concrete terms Apollo's
oracle gives rise immediately to the creation of a false message. The overt link between oracle and false message is striking.\(^1\)

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Orestes' report of Apollo's oracle is extremely brief; the possibly accurate reporting of 36-7 is undercut by the casual and vague τοιούθε (35) and τοιούνδε (38). The subsequent details of the dolos enjoined by Apollo appear to be Orestes' own, but we have no idea what Apollo actually said.\(^8\) The extent of the god's involvement is left unclear throughout the play. The context in which this message is reported is already that of kairos and akme and the oracle appears passé and insignificant compared with the details of the dolos to be carried out. But when Orestes speaks of himself as πρὸς θεὸν ὠρμημένος (70), Apollo seems to be implied.

It is noteworthy that the Paedagogus is invited to listen hard\(^9\) to Orestes' narration and correct it if necessary (29-31). This suggests that the details of the false death are Orestes' own idea. The Paidagogus of course makes no corrections here, but certainly does so at 82ff., when he so firmly brackets Apollo with the deed of revenge and makes this the justification for excluding Electra (μὴ δὲν πρὸσθεν ἦ τὰ Λοξίου). In this authoritative line, (reminiscent of Cho. 900-2) he is, like Orestes at 70, putting the entire action of the play under the auspices of the god.

The false message thus has a problematic and indefinite provenance. Apollo, Orestes and his tutor are in different ways all involved in its authorship.

Verses 59-66 are often interpreted in the light of superstitious scruple,\(^10\) as an almost proverbial contemporary topos on "profit",\(^11\) and as a reflection of historical events.\(^12\) They certainly constitute the only reflective section of this practical speech and must be considered important; I agree with Kells that there may well be some contemporary reference we cannot catch. Narratologically at any rate, 59-66 seem to express a general devaluing of communication in itself,\(^13\) inevitably attendant on deciding to lie. They point forward not just to the immediate denial of

\(^{1}\) Cf. Cho. 556ff. where the same elements are also closely juxtaposed, without creating a frame for the entire action in the same way.

\(^{1A}\) A familiar Sophoclean technique: cf. Robinson CQ n.s. xix (1969), 44f. of the oracle in Phil., "Sophocles at no point allows any of his characters to purport to quote the exact words of the oracle ... verbatim and in full, uncut, unexpanded and uninterpreted. This is surely deliberate."

\(^{9}\) The imperatives at 30 and 31 provoke the audience too to listen to the subsequent details of the plot, each element of which is later carried out as indicated here.

\(^{10}\) See Eur. Helen 1050-2 and Dale ad loc.

\(^{11}\) See Kells 6 and note ad loc

\(^{12}\) Cf. Hdt. 4.14 and 95

\(^{13}\) Cf. Phil. 111-12
communication to Electra, but to the ethos of the entire play, which right through to the end explores a world in which narrative is used to deny and deceive rather than communicate truth and knowledge - narrative is justified as transaction for profit (61).

The play is not bounded by a closing framework in which the deceitful action is clearly understood to be over, and well over. Aegisthus is still alive as the play ends, and there is no clue about the political future of Argos. There are no unambiguous pointers to the future elsewhere either, and so the audience is forced to pick up the burden the characters have just dropped, unable to contemplate with satisfaction "an action complete in itself." It is left with the disturbing and uncompleted effect on itself of so much deceit.

The sequence of messages within the inner plot will now be examined in turn, looking at their truth value, the authority of the narrator and the effect on the narratee.

7.2. Walling up, 373ff. (overheard/ metaphorical information)

Borrowing the idea from his own Antigone, Sophocles makes Chrysothemis tell Electra she is soon to be walled up outside the country's boundaries if she does not stop her laments (379-382). As with news of Orestes, this

14The three final choral lines, 1508-10, have been very widely interpreted (see Segal's discussion 1966, 474ff.). It is hard to restrict them to their surface meaning. Segal argues convincingly 530ff. that Aτρέως is a Sophoclean patronymic referring to Electra, and that the phrase ἀπαίσια... τελευθέν, while recalling the vocabulary of τέλειον and τέρμα and so suggesting fulfilment, is not free from the idea of disastrous fulfilled, since the verb τελεύσω continues the language of biological growth and life (μετατέθεν, ὑπαίσια, φυτεύσιν) which is used consistently through the play to convey the "moral rottenness (ibid. 487) of Mycenae.

15Roberts (1988 185-6) writes of 1497-1500: "Those critics are surely right who argue that Aegisthus' reference to the future misfortune of the family suggests more than his own death; this is made plain precisely by Orestes' attempt in his reply to limit the significance of Aegisthus' remark. It is not, of course, that Aegisthus himself in 1497-8 means anything beyond a vague threat, but Orestes' own shortsightedness (itself stressed by Aegisthus in his reference to Agamemnon's lack of foresight) encourages us to read these lines as referring to his future difficulties. The play, then ends on a note of triumph and completeness, but we are made to think of events in a future beyond this play; familiar with the Aeschylean story, we may imagine Orestes' pursuit by the Erinyes."

16Nor is there any invitation to the audience to find a distance from the onstage events as in Eum., or in the plays of Euripides which include a closing aetiology.

17The only future narrative in Electra is given to the Pædagogus 1364-6, motivated only by deferral. On the deadening effect of the words he uses see Segal 1966, p.519: "The endless succession of nights and "equal days" points back to the static condition of Electra in her first scene."

18Cf. Goldhill 1988, 34: "... the complex ironies of watching the effects of a fiction within a fiction may raise the further question of the effect of the logos of Sophocles, his Electra, on its listeners; that is, the power of drama itself to move by its fictions. The audience is left with a question." See also p.168 n.50.
report too is vague in provenance and lacking in much authority (ἐλλὰ ἐξερήσονται θανάτον κάτωθι ἐγὼ μείλισθαι γάρ ... 378/9). Clytemnestra and Aegisthus might well have discussed this as an option for silencing Electra.¹⁹ No eyewitness is referred to.

The report, however, is a fresh narrative, one offering a potential if fleeting resolution to the impasse between Electra and those in power: she will lament herself to death and then be silenced for ever, properly shut up.

On the whole, critics are inclined to minimise the significance of this passage,²⁰ as if its function is merely to spark off the stichomythia 385-404 which so well displays the sisters’ antithetical positions and shows that Electra is unafraid of death. It is true that the matter is not specifically referred to again²¹ (except perhaps at 626-7); but the idea of immurement, or something similar, had already been raised when Electra compared herself to Niobe and used the phrase ἐν τῶρο πετραίῳ at 149-152. This passage clearly predicates death, an abnormal death-in-life without due ritual to create a proper end. It mirrors Agamemnon’s wrongful death and ritually-incorrect interment²² (the μοίραξολομός, 445). As so often in his loops, Sophocles temporarily invites us to consider this alternative τέλος, suggesting its fittingness as a πότιμος for his heroine.

The narrative is thus thematically and figuratively significant. Moreover, Electra’s position in the play, as she often reminds us, is a death-in-life (eg. 141; 185-6; 207-8). We see her overwhelmingly concerned with Hades and the dead, excluded from life in her own society (312, 328-31, 516-8, 802f., 817-9). Immurement further symbolises the liminal period of mourning which she has entered but cannot leave.²³

7.3. The dream 417ff.: (overheard potential/ symbolic information)

Whatever the range of fifth-century views on dreams may have been,²⁴ dreams have a distinct value, since they interrupt the regular narrative level to offer parallel...
hypodiegetic or extradiegetic narratives. Part of the narrator's play with his narratee, they inevitably inspire acute hermeneutic activity in both recipient and audience, demanding interpretation. There are consequently rich effects of discrepant irony to be obtained from dream narratives. Sophocles worked within a tradition which made abundant and sophisticated use of dreams - including sceptical comments, eg. Od. 19.559-568, II. 2. 80-83, Ag. 274-5, IT 1259-84.

Sophocles plays down the dream. He does not introduce it early on, as in Cho., where it creates the opening brooding atmosphere and context for the developing revenge. Nor does it have Cho's major motivational significance, where the obligation to carry out apotropaic ritual stimulates the initial entry of the chorus and Electra, and Electra's dilemma over the offerings is lengthily discussed while Orestes looks on in secret, learning of her loyalty.

Sophocles' technique is typically ironic. He introduces the dream element with extreme casualness, depriving it of much of its traditional resonance. The chorus noted the entaphia at 326, but no question of their purpose is raised until 404-5; They are a visual reminder to the audience throughout that the traditional plot is under way, but Sophocles perhaps teases us with the possibility that Chrysothemis might depart without Electra finding out about the dream.

Chrysothemis has not attempted to interpret the dream herself, and she is vague about it. Her position is pragmatic and sceptical. For her, "the alarm of Clytemnestra is more important than the apparition of Agamemnon. The dream is only a new reason why Electra should be cautious," (Jebb, on 428-30).

The dream is "artlessly" introduced and its narrator disregards its significance. Also, it is no more than sheer gossip. Chrysothemis' account is fourth- or even fifth- hand (reckoning first hand as the original eye-witness dream experience of Clytemnestra). The dream was "shown to the Sun," and at the same time overheard by a by-stander who then gossiped about the details. We do not know whether she spoke directly to Chrysothemis, or whether Chrysothemis merely overheard. If the latter, the communication has been overheard, rather than directly communicated, twice.

23 The vagueness is highlighted in verse 414, well brought out in Kells' translation made to demonstrate the intensive force of kat-o-ida: "I do not know it in exact detail, except (to be able to) indicate it to a small degree." kathoran is also used at 378 and 426: the verb is clearly significant in highlighting the difficulty of getting hold of an authorised account.
Despite this, Electra, responding only to the vague phrase "a fear in the night" (410), as if she knew her own story, immediately assumes that the dream has a divine provenance and indicates a propitious outcome. Orestes' interpretation of Clytemnestra's dream (Cho. 540-550) was similarly immediate and positive (ἐκδρακοντωθείς ἔγνω κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοῦνειρον ἐννέπει τόδε, 549-550).

In both plays a dream-message addressed to Clytemnestra as a warning of her impending murder by her son is overheard by her hostile children, marking a change from the intended narratee. There are tremendous opportunities for irony here, already exploited by Aeschylus. In Cho. the dream was "adequate" for Clytemnestra (it gave her sufficient information about her fate), but as a communication to Orestes about his fate it exhibited a marked narrative shortfall. Like Apollo's oracle, the dream-message in that play was only a partial account which did not cover all that was to happen.

Electra's comment, πολλά τοι σμικροί λόγοι ἔσφηλαν ἡδη καὶ κατώρθωσαν βροτοῦς (415-6) consequently makes a rich appeal to the theatrical audience, meaning one thing within Electra's frame of expectations, another with reference to the gross deception to be practised on herself, yet another as a comment on the play as a whole.

The altered content of the dream similarly pleases the theatrical audience, as it makes complex allusions to other texts, heightening the complexity of the hermeneutic process. Sophocles deviates from the familiar Stesichorean and Aeschylean snake motif and creates something new, but very recognisable in several interesting respects. The shaping conforms to New Eastern "culture pattern" dreams, where anxiety for future prosperity is frequently symbolised in concrete terms relating to sexual potency/fertility. Like a snake charmer, Sophocles turns the

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26 Cf. Hyllus Trach. 1203-4 who appears to understand from soma (not nekros) that Heracles is asking him to burn his body while still alive.
27 Herodotus too makes extraordinarily good narrative capital out of changing the addressee of a dream. In the sequence Hdt. 7.8-19 Xerxes, anxious because an authoritarian and recurrent dream figure insists that he should attack Greece just when he has accepted advice from Artabanus to the contrary, sends this advisor to sleep in his place. The wise advisor rationalises convincingly: "dreams do not come from God. I ... will tell you what these visions are that float before our eyes in sleep: nearly always these drifting phantoms are the shadows of what we have been thinking about during the day..." (7.16f2, Sélincourt's translation). But the last laugh is on Artabanus - who despite his admirable rationalisation dreams the same dream. As a result, the fatal campaign against Greece gets under way.
28 For parallels see Devereux 229. There are several examples in Herodotus, eg. Hdt. 1.107: Astyages has two dreams about his daughter Mandane. In the first her urine floods the whole of Asia, in the second a vine grows out of her which envelops Asia. The same motif is used 7.19: Xerxes dreams of an olive branch on his head; branches extend from it over the whole earth: μετ' αυτῶν ἐξενεκτέοντο. In the course of his complex historical narratives, Herodotus shows us that whatever action the dreamer takes, he cannot avoid the fulfilment of the dream.
traditional flexible serpent into a rigid royal sceptre, which Agamemnon then plants in the hearth, with clear sexual connotations: the sceptre now softens again and grows into a huge plant giving shade to all Mycenae.

Sophocles here links together powerful symbols from Homer and Aeschylus. The sceptre is that powerful Pelopid sceptre whose genealogy is given Iliad 2. 101ff. Made by Hephaistos, Zeus gave it to Hermes to give to Atreus. In Homer it is the major symbol of Agamemnon's power and in the events of Iliad 2 it is used to articulate an entire narrative sequence, its impeccable credentials counterpointing the ambiguous nature of the power it wields. The impossible movement back from artefact to plant, from object of culture to object of nature inverts Achilles' oath II. 1.234ff. ("Now by this sceptre which since it was cut down will never more bear leaves...") and makes a fitting symbol for the impossible return of Agamemnon from Hades back to the world.

As well as recalling Homer, however, the dream also provokes echoes of Ag. 958-972; part of one of Clytemnestra's most lavish and extravagant speeches of deceptive narration, produced at a critical moment in the play. Agamemnon is successively compared to a plant producing shade against excessive heat, then warmth in winter, then coolness. Synaesthetic images of fertility quickly contradict and dissolve into one another, dream-fashion. The audience understand these lurid, unchecked images mean no good to Agamemnon, despite their surface.

In Electra, Chrysothemis finds the dream meaningless, while Electra and the chorus seem to find it unambiguously hopeful. The complex allusions of this dream, as well as the entire tradition of literary dream interpretation, is against the audience adopting either of these simplistic approaches.

Devereux 251 says the dream in Electra is "psychologically plausible and interpretable without necessarily serving any useful literary end" and, noting that Euripides does without a dream, finds it likely that this element was becoming outmoded for the purposes of the later dramatists. This view hardly does justice to the
subtleties Sophocles has employed in building the dream into the flow of ambiguous communication in this play.

7.4. Stasimon 472-515 (two incompatible narratives)

Choral odes regularly offer narratives at a different diegetic level from the episodes. Sometimes when they sing, the stage is empty, at other times they may address one of the stage figures, but (kommos apart) the convention is that the stage figure does not respond. This being the case, during the singing of a stasimon the audience inevitably approaches the position of addressee, and the generalising tenor of many lyrics specifically invites the audience to make an interpretation of the action in the play to date.

In this stasimon there is a marked disjunction between the strophe and antistrophe on the one hand, and the epode on the other. Janus-like, the ode faces both forwards and backwards in time, the first part optimistic, the second pessimistic. The second part seems to point silently to a feature characteristic of Apollo's oracle - narrative shortfall.

The chorus, now narrator, first offer a predicative narrative addressed to Electra (ò τέκνον (477), based on their interpretation of the dream. The temporal distance from the first narrative level - that of the episode - is small (ού μακροθ χρόνου, 477). Their language is rich in words of prophecy (μάντις 472, πρόμαντις 475, μαντεῖα 498). There are confident future indicative tenses at 475, 477, 482, 489, 501). Their confidence is further stressed in various ways, by the noun θέρσος at 479, repeated 495; and by emphatic phrasing (ού γάρ ποτ᾽ ἀμναστεῖ (482) μήποτε μηποθ (496). They have confidence both that dreams do have meaning (495ff.), and that the correct interpretation of this dream is that Dika and Erinys are coming to avenge Agamemnon. The language is rich in Aeschylean echoes. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are definitely referred to (despite the difficulties of 492-3). There is, interestingly, absolutely no allusion to Orestes himself; it is the Erinys who is spoken of as about to arrive (ηξε in 489f.) Sophocles does not wish to refer us to the opening scene at this point and to the unfolding revenge of the outer plot. Only in the glancing (and familiar) link made between dreams and prophecy (499-500) could we

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32 Burton 1980, 197f., excellently defines the context in which the chorus begin their song.
33 See A.A. Long, Language and thought in Sophocles, London 1968 pp. 136-7, also Kells and Kamerbeek ad loc., also Dawe Gnomon 48 (1976), 231 (review of Kamerbeek's edition). The subject of ἐνέβα cannot be determined, and this gives Dawe's adoption of Blaydes' conjecture ἐνέβα (found in Codex R) an added attraction. But however it may be with the verb, μαντεῖα/ γάμοι must refer to Clytemnestra's sexual activities.
possibly be reminded of Apollo's oracle and see oracle and dream as linked communications. Overall, this is a view of the action in its supernatural rather than human or practical context.

A sophisticated audience familiar with Sophoclean choruses might well react coolly to the first part of the ode. They would know that the chorus' predictive powers are fallible (as at e.g., OT. 1086f.). The more they insist on their infallibility, as here, the wider yawns the familiar tragic gap between opinion and knowledge. In the same way, the ei μὴ formulation of the clauses which open the strophe and, ring-fashion, conclude the antistrophe, might also be thought subtly to undercut the very certainty the chorus seems to be expressing. The emphatically Aeschylean echoes created by the language of Dike and Erinys remind us of the unexpected outcome of Orestes' action in Cho., and encourage the view that the chorus might be as ill-equipped to predict the future as the choruses of Ag. and Cho.

All the same, the message of the strophe and antistrophe remains overtly optimistic. The epode is quite different. As the confident final phrase of the antistrophe (εὐ κατασχήσει) fades away, they adopt a quite different tone.

There is an enormous narrative disjunction at this point, in no way smoothed by any kind of linking passage. The metre changes to iambic-dimic colaria, with their dragging three long final beats. The (over)-confident narratorial persona disappears and a quite different voice emerges, not addressing itself this time to Electra. This voice assumes unquestioned authority and its tone is fatalistic. The first part of the ode made reference to the narrating instance, that is, the context of the chorus as τοιχισμένη (1227) supportive of Electra, guessing the meaning of Clytemnestra's dream. By contrast the epode makes no reference to its narrating instance and so, until the final two words, which abruptly rejoin the analepsis to the first narrative, it has an autonomous, achronic authority.

Plunging into the past, with a narrative reach quite unprecedented in the play to date, the chorus abandon all thought of the future. What has motivated the change of tack? We do not know, unless it is their own mention of Δικαίωσις and Ἐρινύς. They reach back over past generations, exactly focusing not on Pelops himself, but his "ancient wearisome horse-race." This is extreme specificity, given the epode's great

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[^9]: A similar kind of subtle negating technique may be seen in the expression μελέτην τ' ἀποτελομένης ἐνίθρους ἐν φωνῇ (19), where the verb and the notion of fading stars dampens the optimistic sense of dawn breaking. (see Segal, 1966, 492).

[^10]: Pelops was referred to just once before in line 10, in the sinister phrase πολύφθορον τε δῶμα Πελοπιόν.
compression. The complex story of Pelops' victory over Oenomaus, and his relationship with Myrtilus are passed over; it is the moment of Myrtilus' ejection from the chariot and plunge into the sea that is spot-lit (508-12).

After the initial exclamation, ὄς ἔμολες αἰονῆς - the adjective suggesting "everlasting", "perpetual" - a very tight temporal control is maintained through to the end of the ode from εὐτε γὰρ (508) via οὐ τί πώ (513). We are dragged past the intervening generations of the Pelopidae until the final phrase, τολύπονος αἰκεία, abruptly coincides with Clytemnestra's entry for the next episode.

In general this play lacks the expansive and beautiful choral odes of, for example, Antigone, which offer related meanings in other temporal and spatial zones. This epode is almost the only point in the play where the "low horizon" briefly lifts, allowing a conspectus on the Pelopid family's past.

It is thus all too easy to take the epode as Sophocles' main indication of how to "read" past the puzzle of the play's truncated ending and come to an overall understanding of it. On this reading, τολύπονος αἰκεία ironically refers to Orestes' matricide and the phrase "never yet" is taken ironically as well to mean "never yet - and it's not going to now." The Furies referred to in the antistrophe, even if they are not presented onstage at the end, will in some way or other continue to pursue the house and the family (in this play, naturally, attention is focused on the tragic lack of resolution of Electra's position).

However, it would be naive to suppose that Sophocles' intention - especially in this play - is not as much to stimulate the interpretative curiosity of his audience by offering conflicting sets of ideas, as anything else. Moreover, there are two points to bear in mind against the usual reading of the epode. One relates to narrative sequence. This passage comes one-third of the way through a complex series of communications which all together in due order comprise the play. The epode must be primarily interpreted in its context, otherwise we lay ourselves open to the "bleeding chunks" objection. Only the epode's extraordinary narrative reach seems

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36The repeated use of this word tightly binds the generations together. It is used in the plural 486-7 to refer to the death of Agamemnon and at 511 to refer to Myrtilus' death.
37Another such movement away occurs briefly during the kommos between Electra and the chorus, where another similar, but ultimately less "black" family story is recalled as consolation. The chorus refer to Amphaius, who despite a fate similar to Agamemnon's (χρυσόδειτος ἔρμης κρυμβήνα γυναικών, 837), "reigns in full life," πάντως ἐν ἁγίαις, 841. Electra, of course, rejects the comparison (846-8).
38Reinhardt, Friis Johansen, Segal and Winnington-Ingram are in agreement here.
to give it a superior, lasting authority, as if the further it could dig into the past, the more it could explain the future.

Secondly, although the two parts of the ode have so far been treated as if they were totally separate, they are of course a unity of some sort. In fact the epode's surface meaning can readily be aligned to the optimism of the first part, if the phrase πολλόπονος αἰκεία is restricted to its reference to Clytemnestra's entry. The analepsis focusses on two items from the distant past. First, Pelops' wearisome horse-race; second, Myrtilus' violent ejection from the chariot. With due regard for taking items in sequence we need look no further than to the account of Orestes' violent death in a horse-race which is about to interrupt the very next scene.

But to both confirm and confound this view, it is clear that the underlying connection between Pelops' horse-race, Myrtilus' death and the narrative about Orestes is deceit.

Once we have isolated the theme of deceit it is very arguable that the narrative in the epode is doing more than adumbrating events in the next scene. It becomes an undeniably figurative discourse,\(^9\) one in which the content corresponds to something on "the expressive level of the semiotic system as a whole." Pelops' horse-race and Myrtilus' fall from the chariot do indeed point forward to the next scene, and Sophocles, by this thematic advance reference, will make us find the Paedagogus' report particularly resonant, almost as if it had formed the content of a dream.\(^{40}\) Furthermore, the manner in which these elements are brought to our attention - the almost sly brevity used - might alert us to the fact that we are dealing with narrative at its most Protean. We must try to grasp what is offered, but expect a hundred shapes to appear and disappear between our fingers. This passage confirms the play as a deceitful structure.

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\(^9\)See Perron 1989 529f. on figurative discourse.

\(^{40}\)A chariot crash is the basis of the dream in Pers. It is the supernatural means by which Theseus' curse against Hippolytus is achieved. More relevant, in Cho. 1021ff. it is used imagistically to prefigure disaster. In the Paedagogus' speech the fictive chariot crash comprises one extended figure. For a Freudian interpretation see Devereux 219ff.
7.5 Electra and Clytemnestra's agon 516-659 (two more narratives, contradictory and futile)

Clytemnestra and Electra confront one another from positions fixed long ago; but once embarked on argument, they react with a fierceness and freshness as if seven or more years had not passed.

530-551: Clytemnestra’s narrative of Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigeneia is full of I-you markers (e.g. σός 530, σήν 531, ἐγὼ 533, με 534, τήν γ’ ἐμήν 536). There are many rhetorical questions (535, 538, 541, 543, 545, 546), which Clytemnestra answers herself (δοκῶ μέν, 547) and for her dead daughter (φαίνε δ’ ἀν ἡ θανοῦσα γ’ 548). Electra’s response, 558ff. takes the same rhetorical form (I-You markers at 558, 560, 561, 565, 566, rhetorical questions at 560, 579; Electra answers herself, 560, 565). As audience we feel sure they are only repeating what has already been said many times; their dialogue is “reciprocal and potentially infinite”. They are equally matched in their ability to narrate and describe their points of view.

Each woman in her argument makes use of a narrative to incriminate or exculpate Agamemnon, but in the context we are invited to find no real validity on either side. The stories of Iphigeneia’s sacrifice and Agamemnon’s offence against Artemis are meant to be taken as dead issues (rather as Devereux understands the dream). This is discourse which fails to signify at the level of words. Lacking a judge, the debate here ends in an inevitable stand-off. This scene is rich in other aspects of the play’s meaning, but at the level of rational communication it fails.

7.6 Clytemnestra’s prayer, 637-659 (partially disguised and silent narrative)

Clytemnestra’s prayer gives another interpretation of the dream. We have heard the initially sceptical view of Chrysothemis, the guardedly optimistic reaction of Electra, and the chorus’ ode on the subject. Now the proper addressee of the dream narrative addresses Apollo Lycaeus on the subject. She finds the dream ambiguous. The image of the god is, naturally, silent.

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41 Frequentative markers: οὐ 516; ἄτι 517, 525, 530; θυμία 524. See also 552. One unarguable function of the epode has been to create the wearisome sense of the past unchanging into the present.
42 Winnington-Ingram 1980, 223
43 Only one of the many similarities between mother and daughter, for which in general see Kitto 1961, 133-5; Friis Johansen 1964, 17; Segal 1966, 501, 525f; specifically for this scene, see Whitlock Blundell 1989, 172.
44 Recalling the agon in Tro. where Menelaus is incapable of judging the issues.
Electra, who throughout the play so far has either been denied information or been
-treated to second-hand accounts, now merely *overhears* another communication in
silence. All the same, her position is far from powerless at this point: significantly,
she has given permission for the prayer to take place at all (632-3), and her
continuing proximity forces Clytemnestra into words which are guarded.
Clytemnestra's request to Phoebus to hear her κεκρυμμένην βάξιν (638), with
expectations that he will understand even what is not mentioned at all (657-8), alerts
the audience too to listen hard for a sub-text and for *gaps*.

Clytemnestra's response is that of a typical tragic dreamer. Like the Queen in *Pers.*,
Clytemnestra herself in *Cho.* and Hecuba in Euripides' play of that name, the dream
has scared her (δειμάτων 636), and inspires her to offer sacrifice and prayer, but she
feels open about the outcome: she at least *talks* of it as if it were equally likely to
presage good or bad (646-9). She is a woman who has received a message but failed
to understand it. Such lack of acuity presages her vulnerability to the Paidagogus' lies
and the success of the plot.

Often noted is the similar dramaturgical device *OT* 911-23: Jocasta prays for λόσιν
... εὐαγή (cf. Clytemnestra's λυτηρίους εὐχάς, 635-6), and immediately her prayer
*appears* to be positively answered by the entry of the herdsman announcing Polybus'
death (although *in fact* the tragic recognition is advanced by his message). The silent
prayer Clytemnestra wishes Apollo to understand (657-8) is for Orestes' death. It is
this implicit part of her prayer which will appear to be immediately fulfilled.

The prayer's addressee is Phoebus προστατηρίους (637). This epithet, together with
1374f., makes it virtually certain that there was a statue of the god outside the
entrance to the stage building throughout the course of the play, as in *OT*. (not just
some sort of altar on which to lay θύματα, 634). Clytemnestra's prayer reawakens
our awareness of his presence.

Looking at the play as a narrative or communication, there is little doubt that Apollo
is an extremely important figure. The premises of actantial theory show that Apollo
cannot be excluded from consideration simply because he is not a stage figure -
particularly since the statue gives him a permanent stage presence. By this means,
Apollo is an ironically silent witness to all that occurs, continuously reminding the
audience of the fact that he is the *author* of the entire tragic action, the playwright's

45See Kells on 634-59 for views on silent prayer in general in the ancient world.
46"The maker or composer of a narrative." (Prince, 1987)
proxy. Apollo has initiated the syntagmatic chain of events by approving the vengeance and suggesting the stratagem of δόλοι (37). Furthermore, as Kitto remarks, when Orestes says, "The gods have sent me here,' it is true."47 Apollo's importance cannot be minimised - but his motives cannot be clarified either. The role of Apollo in Cho. remained problematic. Here too, subtle reminders in the text keep Apollo in our minds as author of the entire onstage enterprise without allowing us to create any precise logical or causal connection between god and man. This is yet another example of the extreme elusiveness of Sophocles' technique.

In terms of ring-composition, a circle is completed as Clytemnestra speaks. The play began with a message from Apollo; Clytemnestra now offers a message to him.

7.7. False messenger speech

In contrast to the elaborate double act in Trach. and the subtle and shifting deceits of Phil., the false messenger speech of Electra is an overt tour de force of lies, occupying the important dead centre of the play.48 Combining the two different conventional elements of returning hero's deceit and messenger's news, Sophocles creates his longest extant message narrative. Internally, it appears to be the eyewitness, authoritative account denied Electra for so long.

Rather than using Orestes to tell his own lies, as at Cho. 674f., the poet has taken pains in the prologue to flesh out the vestigial figure of the Paedagogus and then reintroduce him here in disguise so that, as innocently perceived by his internal addressees and ironically by the theatre audience, he conforms exactly to the norm of the conventional anonymous or semi-anonymous messenger entrusted by the playwright with a narrative of revelation and truth.

Extended sections of continuous narrative in drama effectively immobilise the onstage narratees, creating a narrative pause at the homodiegetic level. I am not, of course, suggesting that the actors playing Electra and Clytemnestra fail to react to the messenger's speech while it is being delivered, or that their silent reactions are not a highly important part of the design; Clytemnestra's emotional state, however we read it, will occupy the remainder of this scene and the following scenes are devoted to Electra's reactions. All the same, we need to consider that where the narrative is

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47Kitto 1958, 27.
48On the central position of the messenger speech see Brunn, 1957 and Segal 1966, 479-481.
transparent, the temporal pause in stage action is compensated for by the creation of
enargeia, or in Barthes' phrase, "the effect of the real."

But here, given that its narrative content cannot innocently signify, we are forced to
view the rhesis in a different light. Intrinsically, it is a high-risk fiction, succeeding
by sheer inventiveness and rhetorical power. Externally, we are made aware of the work
of art spinning itself into existence before our eyes, creating and breaking illusion as
it goes, and playing on the emotional responses of all involved, including ourselves.
The disturbing effect of watching fictional characters watch another fiction reminds the audience of their own collusion, as individuals willingly involved in the process of illusion, but also judges of narrative, acting ability, and theatrical effect.

Behind his mask the Paedagogus has unlimited narrative authority. First-person
narrative produces two kinds of focalisation, the "experiencing I" and the "narrating
I." The eyewitness experience provides the material with which the narrator
produces his report, and in the words of the report we see a mixture of the two
elements: sometimes the focus is on what was seen, sometimes on the comments or
remarks of the narrator, making use of ex eventu knowledge. With no eventus
underlying the Paedagogus' narrative, there can be no "experiencing I" at all; in
creating such a complete, self-contained narrative about the death of Orestes at the
Pythian Games, the messenger approaches the role of the poet himself.

A narrative report which springs from a real experience is necessarily subject to
restrictions of various kinds - restrictions of place, of access and particularly, of
understanding in relation to what has been seen. These restrictions are an interesting
study in themselves and are often used creatively by the poets. But here, apart

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49Unless we adopt T. von Wilamowitz' view: "Natürlich wissen wir, dass Orest nicht tot ist, und dass später einmal ein
Umschlag kommen wird, aber jetzt steht die Todesnachricht mit ihren Folgen für Elektra so greifbar wirklich vor uns, dass wir
alles andere vergessen und die nächsten Szenen ohne einen anderen Gedanken vom Standpunkte Elektras miterleben" (193).
..."Fragt man sich nach der Stellung des Zuschauers ... Als ein türchtes Kind muss (ihm) neben Elektras starrer Ruhe,
Chrysothemis erscheinen; (ein Kind), das in leichterzer Freude mit leeren Vermutungen spielt und der Wirklichkeit
gegenüber sofort seine Träume fahren lassen und sich Elektras Erklärung des Fundes fügen muss" (194). Kamerbeek (ad 697)
is nearer the mark: "The spectator, here as elsewhere during this deceitful speech, will waver between being carried away by
the splendid rhetoric and his awareness of the deceit."

50An effect created to varying degrees in all the loops under discussion, Phil. 542ff. most of all. One account of the effect is
given by Borges in Partial magic in the Quixote: "Why does it disturb us that Don Quixote be a reader of the Quixote and
Hamlet a spectator of Hamlet? I believe I have found the answer: these inversions suggest that if the characters of a fictional
work can be readers or spectators, we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious."

51 Erlebendes Ich und erzählendes Ich (See de Jong 30f. and note 74).
52See de Jong 12-29
53A particularly rich application of restriction is the messenger speech of OC. At first the messenger is able with anyone else
(ξύρας τας μεγαλειότατες, 1646) to see Oedipus leading Theseus and his daughters to the appointed spot, to see the ritual washing, hear
the words of farewell and orders to Theseus (1587f., 1597f., 1611-1621., 1631-1635); even to hear the voice of godhimself (1627-
from the Paedagogus' brief of convincing his audience that Orestes has died, there are no restrictions in operation at all: his narrative powers are unbounded and there is no clear limit to what he could make his addressees believe.

Sophocles makes us focus on the narrative's special fictive status and consequently admire the element, "messenger speech." We approach the narrative content with something of the appreciation reserved for e.g. Homeric similes, which in a similar way are marked off as bravura inventions, raised to a higher fictive power and with special status within the rest of the work. The Paedagogus' narrative is a dolos and cannot innocently signify. Perhaps it is because of this that it positively crackles with a range of possible interpretations.

According to narrative theory, each new narrative situation is to be "construed as a revised configuration of the entire sequence up to that point (a set of sets) leading to a revised expectation concerning the outcome." In that case, the Paedagogus' speech, which shows Orestes galloping towards a fatal terma or telos, strongly suggests a disastrous telos for the overall action of revenge.

7.7.1 Opening dialogue 660-679: "innocent" conventional markers

In this opening section, every conventional element which normally marks off the messenger's account as an infallibly true, eyewitness statement of fact, is included and exploited to create an ironic verismo. This is particularly underlined in Clytemnestra's request for τάληθες and the Paedagogus' answer καταμήλομην πρὸς ταῦτα.

At 660 the Paedagogus enters with the request for confirmation that he has come to the right place, πῶς ἂν εἰδεῖσθην σαφῶς; εἰ τοῦ τυράννου δῶματε; Αἰγύπτως τάδε; Such a request is an established convention in messengers who come from outside,
Chapter 7

(cf. Ajax 733-4, OT 924-6), and so serves to remind us that the Paedagogus is now adopting his messenger role. He flatteringly recognises the queen and puts emphasis on the fact that the words he brings are "sweet" (667 - cf. ἥξειαν φάτνη at 56), and that they come from friends (667, 671, 672 - cf. 44-6). This increases his theatrical "credibility", as stage messengers are notoriously anxious for their own safety when bringing bad news.57 As early as 668 we understand that Clytemnestra, influenced by the prayer she has just made, has taken the bait (ἐξεξάμην τῷ ἰηθέν, 668).

At 673 comes the headline:58 τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης κ.τ.λ. To this announcement there is a unique twofold reaction. Electra expresses despair, Clytemnestra excitement (τί φης, τί φης), coupled with the wish to exclude Electra from the communication (μὴ ταύτης κλέε). The entire sequence of headline and twofold reaction are repeated again (676-8).59 Sophocles has exploited discrepant awareness in his narratees before (cf. Jocasta and Oedipus hearing the news from Corinth), but by including Electra with Clytemnestra as duped narratees, he has created a different kind of contrast. Mother and daughter, who should lament together, yet again demonstrate their polarity.

Clytemnestra's question at 679, τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται; is another standard feature: request for detail leads in to the full narrative (sometimes after fairly lengthy question-and-answer sequences).60 The Paedagogus' answering opening line is a "declaration of intent to narrate," (680), another typical feature61 which prepares the audience too.

7.7.2 Introductory section of speech, 680-95

With the mention of the Pythian Games we know that the Paidagogus is embarking on the account indicated in the prologos, 47f.

57cf. the guard's comic hesitation Ant. 223f. and in particular line 277, στέρητο γάρ οὔδεις ἐγγελον κακῶν ἐπάν.
58For Sophoclean headlines or summary phrases elsewhere, see Trach. 181-3, 234-5, 739-40, 874-5; OT 939-44, perhaps 1180-1, 1234-5; Ant. 245-7, 384, 1173; El. 877; Phil. 561-2; OC. 1579-80.
59There are some parallels of technique here with the incredulous reaction of the chorus to the Nurse's headline Trach. 874-5. Twice in antilabe 876-7 they repeat the Nurse's statement of Deianeira's death as a question.
60Cf. Ajax 747; Trach. 246-7, 748, 878; OT 1236; Phil. 601-2; OC. 1585. Ant. 237-48 is a near-comic exchange in which the ordinary convention is turned on its head: Creon asks questions to stimulate the guard's account, but the latter resolutely insists on talking about himself, 387, 406, 1172, 1281. In the case of Chrysothemis' narrative El. 871ff. there is a notable absence of the usual question: Chrysothemis gives the good news of Orestes' return (κάρος ᾧ Ὀρέστης, 877), but Electra absolutely refuses to elicit the details her sister is burning to relate. It is only after grudging permission to speak is given at 891 that the detailed account is given. This pattern is the same as in preceding scenes described p.153. As so often, Electra exercises control over the flow of words.
61Cf. Ajax 719; Trach. 181-2, 749, 899; OT, 1240; Ant. 234, 245, 407, 1193; El. 892; OC. 551-3
The ludic element of narrative could not be more splendidly thematised than in these resplendent Games. But more specifically, as so often in loops, the false narrative (particularly where it concerns the horse-race) sets up complex references (i) within the world of the play - most obviously to the epode (ii) outside it to other texts (literary and metatheatrical references) (iii) outside it to the contemporary real world. Of the literary references, some belong to epinician lyric, but the overwhelming, overt reference is to Homer, since in the focal section of the speech, the Paedagogus clearly adapts the fons et origo of all subsequent chariot race narratives, II. 23. 262-650. The connection with Aeschylus is less tangible.

Taken together all these references create many doloi parallels and glancing possibilities, pleasing the theatrical audience and teasing them to make interpretations concerning ultimate outcome. At the same time, the dramatic audience follows the narrative with the heightened attention given to dangerous sports.

Although the scholiasts and (probably) Aristotle felt that the games were an anachronism, we cannot be sure that this was the case for Sophocles or his original audience. As they were a continuing feature of contemporary life, a possible gamut of contemporary external associations would become activated at this point: not least, the theatrical audience would enjoy the probability that a noble reare in nearby Phocis would enter the lists at Delphi. 693-5 would have had a convincingly realistic, as well as heroic, ring.

Actors: Orestes is quickly established as a hero whose time of aristeia is at hand. He is λαμπρός, a σέβας (685), wins all the contests for which he enters (690ff.) and ὀλβίζετε' (693). He does this in the thoroughly public context of the games, under the gaze of other actors who (realistically) include heralds, umpires and an entire audience drawn from all the communities of Greece (πάντα ποίησει σέβας). Orestes is presented as the glorious scion of a noble house, of almost mythic potential.

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62 See p.114.
63 Jebb, Kamerbeek and Kells' commentaries, together with Davidson 1988, have adequately noted the similarities of diction which create Homeric colouring. On the whole my remarks will be restricted to similarities at the level of narrative elements.
64 It undoubtedly did act as the "mother narrative" for later accounts, but all the same it is interesting (and typical) that Homer's race too is twice presented through Nestor's eyes as a continuation of an ancient tradition (see 331-3 for the probable antiquity of the race-track and 629ff. for games held in the previous generation to honour Amaryneus.)
65 See Easterling's discussion, 1985 7ff.
66 The point was first made by Kaibel on El. 680.
67 It was part of the procedure at the games for the herald to call out the name, patronym and country of origin of competitors before a race (Finley & Pleket, 1976, 27).
68 cf. El. 159ff., ὅν καὶ κλέανθα γά τοὺς Μυκηναίους / δέξεται εὐπατρίδαν, Δίδω εὐσφόντι / βήματι ... In this lyric passage the formulation is strikingly Pindaric.
It is interesting that no common features of message narrative are employed which would individualise the figure of Orestes. We have no physical description of him (no hair colour, no gesture), nor does the Paedagogus ever give us Orestes' own words or thoughts, either in direct or indirect speech. This is a unique omission of conventional elements which would provide enargeia to the account. Homer himself does not hesitate to report the words of his charioteers while racing (Iliad 23. 409f., 426f., 439f.)

This Orestes is a temporary cipher with no existence outside the Paedagogus' words. So in that sense he is fittingly blank. However, Homer never tells us the colour of Helen's hair, and in the teichoscopia scene our perception of her is largely focused through the eyes of admiring Trojans (e.g. Il. 3. 156f.). Presenting a character through third person focalisation is arguably more effective than a narrator's list of epithets. So here, Orestes is described only as he appears to the general multitude, and the view of him is restricted to just so much as could be seen by an average spectator.

The omission of detail is poignant in relation to the two listening women, neither of whom have seen Orestes since childhood. The narrator's focalisation through spectators makes him publicly glorious - a son and brother to take proudly to one's heart in less painful circumstances.

Events, time and space: the glorious public space, the open male world of critical speed and action producing definite results, could not provide a greater contrast with the enclosed, static world of the women.

Competing in the individual contests (eioεξελθειν and èξελθειν) is an activity for which the words agon (682) and krisis (684) come into play - the keynote vocabulary of the prologue (cf. 22, 75, 85). It reminds us that the performance of the speech to which we are listening - the narrating instance - is itself the first part of the crucial enterprise of seizing power. The competitive content of the Games thus mirrors what is going on at the same time as it conceals it. The outcome of the Paedagogus' vision...
narrative - disaster - can arguably be taken to offer a parallel outcome to that which we are to expect from the revenge-and-return plan.

The Paedagogus' "editing" at 688ff. produces a very marked frequentative stress. By building up a picture of continued victories he enhances the picture of Orestes as a great hero, one whose fall is typically preceded by conspicuous success. This prepares for the significant contrast of 696-7, a bridge passage between the introductory and the main narrative which is also a gnome of the utmost importance.

7.7.3 Main section: Horse race 696-763

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοῖς θεῶν
βλάπτη, δύνατ' ἐν οὐδ' ἐν ἱσχύων φυγεῖν.⁷²

This section has its own ring construction, ταῦτα μὲν τοῖς θεῶν at 696 balanced by τοιαύτα σοι ταῦτ' ἐστίν at 761. A frame is created in which the story functions (nb. γάρ, 698) as a "παράδειγμα οἰκείον" for the gnome.

The resumptive patronym 694-5, reminiscent of 1-2 and, at 699, the repetition of morning as the time when the horse race was instigated (cf.17-19), subtly invite us to superimpose the horse race over the main plot as a model for prediction. All racing is naturally focussed on telos and outcome.

Kamerbeek says that blaptein here combines the Homeric and classical meanings of impedire and damno afficere, but although LSJ distinguish between references to horses' feet being tripped, disabled, entangled in reins, or arrested, and more metaphorical expressions relating to states of mind - distracted, perverted, misled - blaptein seems from the outset to be a combination of both concepts, always containing the idea of movement catastrophically arrested by divine agency. A good Homeric example of this is Od. 1.195, θεοὶ βλάπτουσι κελεύθου (cf. Od. 4.380, ὅς τύς μ' ἁθανάτων πεδάω καὶ ἔδησε κελεύθου). Here Oresteian associations intertwine with the Homeric, as blabe and blaptein form an important part of Aeschylus' vocabulary of ate and entrapment: at Ag. 120 the hare is βλάβεντα λοισθὸν δρόμων, at 1535-6 Δίκα δ' ἔξω πράγμα θήγεται βλάβας πρὸς

⁷³For this term see Friis Johansen, General Reflection in tragic rhesis, Copenhagen 1959, 54ff.
Griyavaiai Moipaç. At Cho. 328 Agamemnon himself is ὁ βλάπτων, and there is the difficult but interesting conjunction ὁδόλως ὀδόλα βλαπτομένων Cho. 955-6. In this play the notion of blaptein is also evoked with foot imagery, as when Erinyes, agents of ἀτε, are described as πολύποις καὶ πολύχειρ (489) or χαλκόσοις (491). At 955-6 Orestes is associated with an Erinys when the chorus at 1391-2 sing παράγεται γὰρ ἐνέρων δολίσποις ὀρογγός εἶσο ἐδόλα κ.τ.λ.. It becomes hard to give an innocent reading even to the phrase ὁκύποις ἀγών (699).

To the audience, blaptein is highly likely to have evoked the Oresteian idea of the family Erinyes, here given a greater narrative reach than in Aeschylus by going right back to Myrtilus' curse. The Paedagogus has just resonantly defined Orestes as Agamemnon's son (694-5). What more appropriate verb than blaptein to describe the family's unending (aianes) association with ἱππεία, ἀθλε, Erinyes and ἀτε? The epode had already suggested that the action of the play is operating "under the sign" of this kind of blabe.

Two particularly relevant passages in Cho. (794ff. and even more 1022ff.) are possibly "activated," suggesting (for the time being) that the disastrous end of Cho. is indeed a model for this play. In the first of these, Orestes appears as both horse and hoped-for victor, but in the second Orestes, pursued by the Erinyes, says that his phrenes are like bolting horses carrying away their charioteer. All this might suggest to the audience that, outside the frame of the horse race, Orestes also will meet with madness and ruin.

From Clytemnestra's point of view it seems clear that, having prayed to live ἄπλαξει βίῳ (650) she can feel confident that Apollo, in his own Games, is fulfilling her prayer by inflicting blabe on her enemy.

The non-combatant Nestor frames the Homeric horse race. His advice to his son Antilochus is positioned early on at 23.306-348, and his response to the award of 23.348.
fifth prize, with the story of his own earlier exploits in games, 626-650, concludes the horse race section. Nestor's highly self-evident tactics for victory seem to be treated by Homer himself as a hoary old topoi: Nestor's detailed advice is conspicuously not matched by any subsequent description of how the contestants turn the nussa during the race. The amusing narrative gap here is not subsequently filled in - except by two small and ironic details.\(^7\)

The frame of Nestor - who is so often given authority by Homer to replace the main narrator with the delivery of an extradiegetic narrative - is matched here by the Paedagogus, temporarily licensed by Sophocles to tell the false story. Nestor's advisory relationship to his son is mirrored in that of the Paedagogus to Orestes.\(^7\) The superimposition from epic here recalls the similar superimposition of the double figures journeying across the sea in Phil.\(^8\) To the theatrical audience it is a pleasing verismo that the Paedagogus should choose the Homeric account on which to base his own: on another level it is particularly delightful - but also ominous - that on this occasion Orestes exactly carries out Nestor's advice to Antilochus - with fatal consequences.\(^8\)

In the Homeric account, gods intervene between the two leading contestants. Eumelus was favoured by Apollo but injured by Athena, so that Diomedes was clear victor. Antilochus' contest for second place against Menelaus receives the most attention from Homer, but although Antilochus has seen the hand of Athena at work ahead (405ff.), he is given no divine assistance. In his Pythian Games adaptation, Sophocles creates ten contestants from different communities,\(^8\) but lets eight of

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\(^{7}\)At 462 Idomeneus, one of the spectators, reports that Eumelus, not Antilochus, was ahead at the turning post. (Did Antilochus decide not to carry out Nestor's advice, or was he incompetent to do so?) Then at 638ff. it becomes apparent that the great old advisor himself, despite victories in other contests, was not himself victorious in the chariot race of his youth.

\(^{7}\)The simile 25-8 is striking, given the scarcity of similes in Sophocles. Orestes' comparison of the Paedagogus to a trusty horse seems an allusive pointer to this scene.

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\(^{7}\)See Kells and Kamerbeek ad loc. for the realistically modern origins of five of the contestants in northern Greece.
them crash together, thus concentrating on a flat-out climax for first place between Orestes and his Athenian opponent. Because of 696-7, a god - surely Apollo, author of the oracle, addressee of Clytemnestra, shown as a statue on the stage, and president of the Pythian Games - presides over the entire disaster.

Orestes has Thessalian mares fit for a hero, not Antilochus' comically slow Pylian horses. Like Antilochus however, the Paedagogus' narrative gives us to understand that the lot has allocated him the favourite inmost position. It is interesting that although the lot is mentioned (El. 710) its result is omitted and has to be understood.

Homer's race, rich in metis and doloi vocabulary in one sense thoroughly suits the themes of Electra. Nestor's advice to Antilochus contains an unusual tricolon on metis; Apollo "cheats" Diomedes and Athena plays a trick on Eumelus; then Antilochus wins - in Homer's words κέρδεσιν, οὖ τι τάχει γε, παραφθάμενος Μνέλαον (515), and in Menelaus' words, βλάψας δέ μοι ἱπποὺς (571). But there is contrast here too, since this Homeric metis is non-tragic: no-one dies, and the doloi merely give spice to the race without producing ate.

In fact the Homeric horse race ends in ideal resolution of a series of oppositions, creating a sense of harmony between the combatants, leading to closure in the final book. The world of the play, however, including this Pythian horse race, is utterly devoid of any such possibilities of resolution. The contrast is powerful. So Sophocles, having created through his Paedagogus a race rivalling Homer's in intensity and excitement, one bound in delivery to quicken the hearts of both internal and external narratees, now moves away from his Homeric model to carry out the tragic shaping presaged by 696-7. Orestes hits the post, is thrown and caught up in the reins (the phrase σῶν δὲ ἐλίσσεται τιμητοῖς ἵμασι, 746-7, recalling blaptein; see also 836-7 and 863). Three-fold focalisation creates the successive frames through which the narrative achieves closure, moving back from its brilliantly tragic fiction to the drabness of the stage world: the spectators (1) respond with a splendidly ambiguous

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8As Kells notes, the sense of 720-2 demand this position.
8This recalls other possible ellipses, at Trach. 1197 (see p.122 n.33) and El. 410ff. (p.159 & n.26).
8Achilles wants to give the disappointed Eumelus the second prize. When Antilochus is affronted at this idea and suggests awarding another piece of booty, Achilles yields and does so, satisfying both parties. Menelaus wants an external tribunal to judge Antilochus' behaviour, changes his mind and decides to judge the case himself, then tries to make Antilochus swear an oath about the manner of his victory: Antilochus utters yielding words and offers the prize he has just won; Menelaus gives him a horse in return. Finally, the unclaimed fifth prize is bestowed on Nestor with an exchange of words which make a broad acknowledgement of the finality of (Patroclus') death and of (Nestor's) old age.
the body of Orestes, disentangled by other charioteers, becomes
unrecognisable even to his philoi (2). The narrator (3), after introducing some
Phocians who are coming into Argos with the urn, closes the account with a sphragis
which is a modest reaffirmation of himself as one eyewitness among others (τοῖς
ἵδονειν, οἶπερ ἔτοιμον, 762).

The pace of the narrative, with its lengthy background, full description, and speeding
up at the end, mimics the course of the race itself. The Paedagogus creates a brilliant
Orestes - and then brutally destroys his creation. Through the vivid compression of
his narrative, we see Orestes' body now hovering between earth and air, now
unrecognisably bloodied, now burnt and the remains compressed into a small urn\(^9\)
for immediate delivery to the narratees.

Sophocles explores the fascinating and complex effects of this speech on Electra and
Clytemnestra in the remainder of this scene and beyond. Their reactions are outside
the scope of this chapter. It is the very complex reactions of the audience that have
been more under scrutiny in this discussion. The dramatic audience is no doubt
deeply engrossed in the blow-by-blow description of the race and then, like Electra,
crushed by the death of Orestes. The theatrical audience might admire the
appropriateness of the choice of story, the skill of the narrator, the plurality of
references and consequently of possible meanings. Ultimately, we are contemplating
the deceitful, extraordinary power of narrative.

Concluding note

The design of this thesis has been selective and has merely given examples of some
narrative strategies. It has not attempted to delineate a comprehensive system for the
role and application of narrative theory in respect of ancient tragedy - a daunting, if
interesting and worthwhile, task.

\(^8^\) An olologue is often a women's cry of thanksgiving (eg. Iliad 6.301), thus hinting at Clytemnestra's reaction, which is to be tested
further immediately after this speech 766-784.
\(^9^\) Cf. Ag. 433ff.
However, using some of the methodologies of narrative theory it has been possible to establish some new perspectives on the structure of tragedy, and to help the reader see in a fair measure of detail some of the differences in narrative strategy between Aeschylus and Sophocles. Narrative theory has made it possible to take a fresh look at the poorly-defined messenger speech, and to understand its function in association with proleptic narratives such as dreams and oracles. It has been interesting to see the similarity of function served in theory by these elements, and in practice the very varying but always ironic use Aeschylus and Sophocles make of them in the hermeneutic structure of any given play.

There are several different directions more work using the same methodology could take. In general terms, it would be interesting to bring Euripides into focus, investigating his own idiosyncratic narrative techniques and setting them against those of his earlier contemporaries. A study of the functioning of choral lyric as a narrative element in the strategy of the plays overall is certainly necessary: this was an omission keenly felt throughout the writing of this thesis, and it would demand close attention to the functioning of time in a play, an area which the methodology of narrative theory is particularly well-suited to analyse, and where I feel it has an enormous amount to offer. The three playwrights would certainly exhibit illuminating differences of practice in this area.

I suggested that the narratives of Persae overlapped and interconnected, using repeated images to create an essentially religious statement about Xerxes' expedition against Greece. I am particularly interested in trying to understand the complex effects at issue when Sophocles, in his different way, repeatedly recycles the same story-line within a single play, superimposing different versions and offering variations on the first account. These may be references to other texts or sheer inventions on the part of the poet - either way the superfluity of narrative lines is undoubtedly a fascinating hermeneutic device worthy of more attention. Creusa's repeated account of her rape in Ion points to a related use of the technique in Euripides and it would be interesting to explore the subject for this playwright too.
FIG. 1 A simplified theatrical communication model

(from Elam, 1980, p.39)

FIG. 2 A narrative communication model

(adapted from Pfister, 1988, p.3)
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